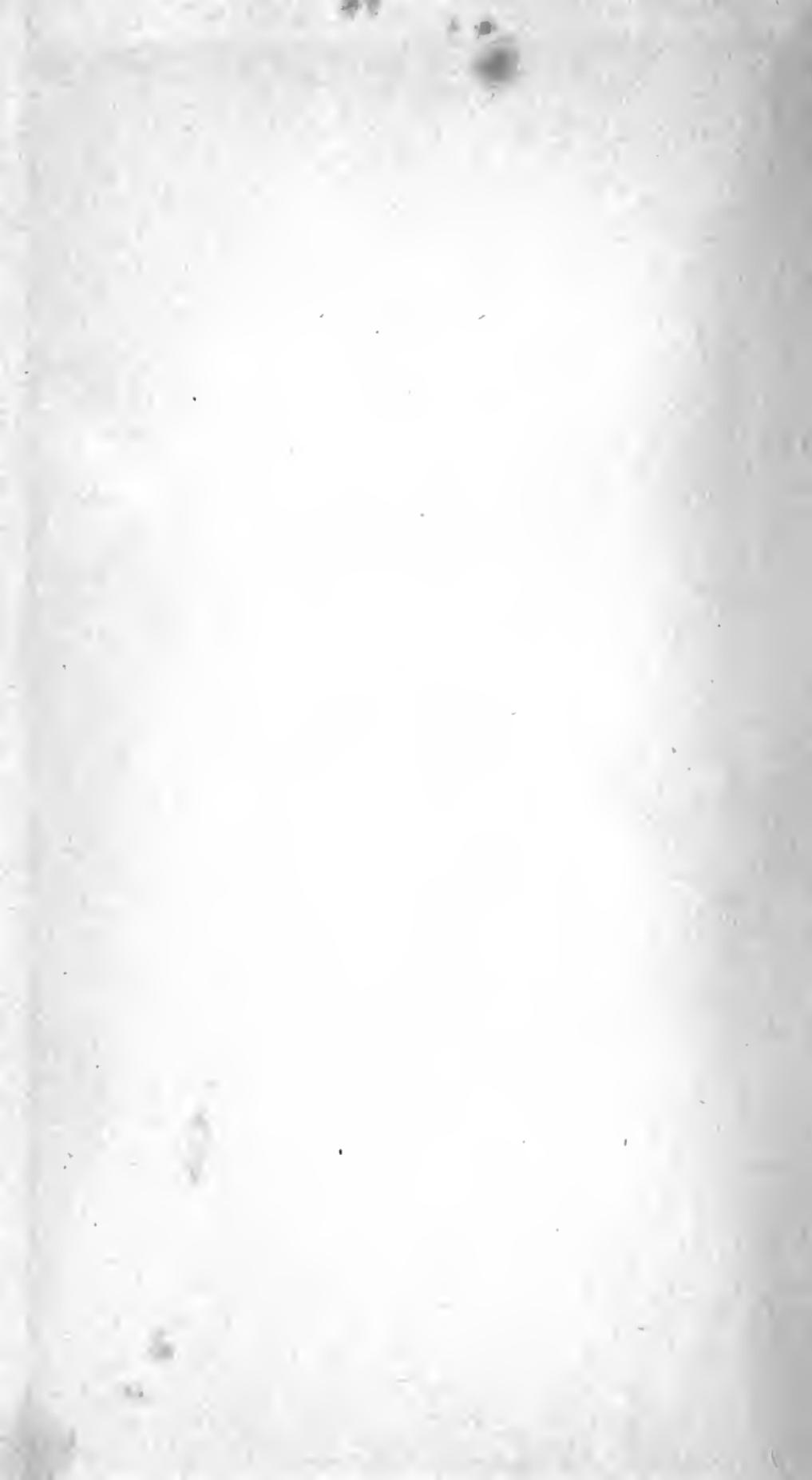




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A ROCKY SPRING IN YANKEE LAND

New England Joke Lore

THE TONIC OF YANKEE HUMOR

BY

ARTHUR G. CRANDALL

Author of "Optimistic Medicine"



PHILADELPHIA

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DEDICATED TO THOSE
STALWART SONS OF NEW ENGLAND
WHOSE ABILITY TO THINK STRAIGHT, COMBINED
WITH AN UNRUFFLED POISE AND NEVERFAILING
SENSE OF HUMOR, HAS ENABLED THEM AND
THEIR DESCENDANTS TO TAKE A LEADING PART
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR GLORIOUS COUNTRY



FOREWORD

THE dry wit of the New England Yankee has done much to cheer the Lonely Traveler on his way. It has oiled the thinking machinery when it creaked and provided inspiration for that spontaneous good fellowship which helps so much to make life worth living.

The following pages are not the product of an overworked imagination, but a record of actual happenings. The characters who pass in review before the reader are real personages whose various experiences have gladdened many adjacent firesides.

However, the author realizes that certain serious and literal souls are so constructed that what to others is a source of glee and merriment, is to them but "the crackling of thorns under a pot." Hence the origin of his conscientious plan to display in the book's "show window," so to speak, a sample of the brand of Yankee humor the reader may expect to find should he resolve to read further.

FOREWORD

Therefore, let us turn aside from these gracious words of the author as above and consider for a moment the soliloquy of Uncle Andrew Cheney, who did not like his son-in-law.

Uncle Andrew did not like work very well either, which is often unfortunate for a husband and father of a family. In view of his own impecunious state, it was peculiarly annoying to him to continually be witnessing the lavish display of an elderly neighbor who had considerable inherited property, but, who though a long time married, was childless.

One summer evening Uncle Andrew was sitting disconsolately on the steps of the little country grocery store, when he heard the clatter of horses' feet and saw the well-to-do neighbor driving by with his pair of high stepping colts. Uncle Andrew scowled but said nothing. Again came the thud of feet and the horses and proud driver, coming back up the country road, once more passed the store. Uncle Andrew glowered at the spectacle with increasing disgust, but still managed to restrain himself.

FOREWORD

A third time the gay equipage swept past. This was too much and Uncle Andrew, deeply stirred, began to talk to himself. A neighbor, sitting near was the only listener, but what he heard he considered well worth repeating.

"Oh! Yes," Uncle Andrew muttered. "You are a mighty smart man, you are. And you've got some fine hosses, too."

A gleam came in his eye.

"You are a smart man, but I've got one thing you haven't got and never will have; and that's the biggest liar for a son-in-law there is in this county."

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CHAPTER I

SHOWING SOME GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

WHEN the young business man or girl stenographer who has grown up in one of the innumerable thriving towns or cities of the broad Mississippi Valley, scans the morning paper on the way to the daily task and reads of the incidental happenings duly chronicled as New England News, there may perhaps be a glance of the mind's eye at that little corner of the map of the United States as revealed in the not remote school days. Then it was necessary, if one would be on harmonious terms with the teacher, to at least memorize the state capitals of Vermont, New Hampshire, and little Rhode Island, as well as those of the somewhat much more imposing looking states of Maine, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. And how small and insignificant they all looked compared with the rest of the map!

It is true that geographies of good standing are not supposed to deceive, but it is doubtful if any of them ever quite did jus-

tice to the northeast corner of the U. S. of America.

And when, as sometimes happens in these modern times, the young business man marries the little stenographer and by industry and intelligence becomes prosperous, there is a desire for the well earned holiday. He and the girl stenographer now become a matron, if permitted choice, are impelled to explore that same little corner of the earth so shabbily set forth by the map, but so attractively described by acquaintances who have toured that section in summer.

And perhaps they will repeat these visits and view many smiling valleys and listen to the soothing lullabies of the surf by night and to unconvincing statements of hotel clerks by day—and yet will have missed the most satisfying and illuminating characteristic of New England—contact with the real typical New England Yankee.

Nowhere on earth does the aphorism that appearances are often deceitful more frequently prove to be true than in New England, especially in the rural districts. The impressive

appearing motorist displaying the now familiar license tag of the region may be a local tradesman rated in the commercial register as "capital \$500 to \$1000, credit limited." Just behind in a cloud of dust the carelessly dressed man in shabby looking buggy drawn by a placid old horse, may own a fine farm, many pedigreed cattle and possess in addition an abundance of reserve cash with which to take advantage of any favorable opportunity for investment. While the apparel may "oft portray the man," it is far from being an infallible test in New England. Even when the native of this region is transplanted to some bustling city, he is prone to develop carelessness in dress as prosperity steals upon him.

The native resident who remarks casually that the New England climate consists of "nine months winter and three months late in the fall," is not probably making any plans to remove elsewhere. He is taking a sardonic pleasure in making it clear that he is laboring under no delusions as to what the seasons

will reveal in the months to come. He makes no attempt to gloss over the enormities of the midwinter season, but indeed seems to take much satisfaction in quoting the below zero records which make a Philadelphian, for instance, gasp with horror.

Overlooked by Tourists

A sturdy woman of middle age, who had been born and raised in a northern New England region, was chatting with a traveler about some recent extremely cold weather and told him that the temperature at her home had gone down to about 38 degrees below zero. As he expressed some interest she added, "over in the next town it was 46 below." Upon noting the surprise occasioned by this statement she hastened to say that it was 52 below at the same time in another town about twenty miles distant. She then assumed an expression of great candor and proceeded, "My daughter, who lives about ten miles beyond that place, wrote that their thermometer registered 58 degrees below zero."

She was a truthful woman and a good Methodist. The abashed listener hastily changed the subject.

Stories of such extreme cold seem to be exaggerated, to strangers who have traveled these districts in ordinary winter weather, but it is merely exceptional rather than impossible. To people of normal health such cold waves are merely an unpleasant incident. Those of experience will insist that on the average the winter of even, steady cold is healthier than the warm ones.

While there is, of course, a temptation to elderly people of means to spend their winters in some warmer section, there are plenty of instances on record to prove that it is usually better to "stick it out" at home, unless of course the change of climate is to be permanent. Withstanding the cold develops vigor for the relaxing days of spring and summer. Besides, in this matter as in many others, it is evident that nature abhors a quitter.

“Year Before Last Winter’s Snow”

It is the winter of unusually deep snows that stimulates the Yankee sense of humor. An early summer visitor driving through a deep gorge, scarcely touched at any part of the day by sunshine, found a man busily shoveling snow which had evidently drifted deep across the road.

“You must have had lots of snow here last winter,” he remarked as he drove by.

“Oh! no,” was the reply, “this is winter before last’s snow.”

The School Master and His Snow Grave

Among the legends clustering about a little country schoolhouse is a comedy in which deep snow furnished the motif and more literally the environment. An earnest young college student who was self-supporting, secured the privilege of teaching the winter term of school. Among his pupils were several husky youths to whom burning the midnight oil made little appeal. It soon became evident to the parents that the well-meaning

but somewhat diffident teacher was destined for trouble. A tremendous snowfall with high drifts brought events to a climax. While the teacher was away for his lunch at the noon hour, the boys dug a deep "grave" in a snowdrift near the schoolhouse, and when their unsuspecting victim approached he was promptly seized, and in spite of his struggles, placed in the grave and lightly sprinkled with snow. Needless to say he was glad to resign his position and make way for a successor of probably less education but considerably more muscle.

The successive snow storms often bring about a condition of the back roads that makes traveling difficult in the latter part of the winter. Under these conditions it is an unwritten law that as compared with those who travel light, the heavily loaded team shall have the right of way. On a certain occasion this custom was peremptorily challenged.

Drifted Roads and the Right of Way

Two families of the neighborhood were far from friendly. Two brothers of one of these

uncongenial families returning home from town with a horse and sleigh chanced to meet the robust scion of the other family with two horses and a big sled loaded with logs. Instead of yielding to the work team as precedent required, these young hopefulls demanded half of the roadway. Although fully appreciating the personal motive in this action, the driver of the log team blandly explained that if he were to turn his horses into the soft deep snow by the roadside, his load would be stuck in the drift. Interpreting this explanation as an evidence of timidity, one of the young men jumped from the sleigh and taking the two team horses by the bridles, started to turn them into the drift. The driver was quick as well as athletic and in a very few seconds a three cornered fist-fight was well under way. It was short and decisive, after which the two brothers meekly turned their horse and sleigh out into the snow drifts, passed the load of logs and went home. The scarlet evidence of bloody noses in the snow soon faded, but numerous firesides were cheered by the story which soon went the rounds of the neighborhood.

While the rural midwinter season tends to physical inactivity, the Yankee sense of humor is apparently stimulated. It may be said, however, that while the sarcastic brand of humor is not popular, occasionally some "deep thinker" will evolve an intricate plot like the following.

The Post Holes in the Ice

In a certain community there was a newly hired farm hand whose ingenuous innocence was a constant temptation. A young blacksmith found out that the farm hand was especially fond of trotting races. He accordingly proceeded to elaborate on a mythical trotting meet that was supposed to soon take place on the lake. The stranger's eyes sparkled. That was something like the real life. He asked what it was going to cost to see the races. The blacksmith named a very high figure, but hastily reassured the young man that it would be easy for him to secure a season ticket if he would help to get things in readiness. The farm hand eagerly agreed and asked what he could do. The blacksmith told him that of course there would have to be a board fence around

the ice track and that it would be necessary to dig post holes in the ice, indicating the section of the lake where the fence must be built. The next morning the confiding hired man got a day off and promptly proceeded to the lake, devoting several hours to the laborious task of post hole digging before someone's curiosity led to an investigation and the disillusionment of the victim.

It is not characteristic of the normal New England mind to dwell upon that which is somber. That trend of mind which contemplates with satisfaction the gloomy and funeral, never fails to create amusement among normal Yankees.

The Man Who Took Comfort at Funerals

There is an old time story of the eccentric old bachelor who lived with his married brother, a bustling person of numerous activities, noted for a propensity to begin many enterprises but seldom finish them. Poor "Hamp," the bachelor, was constantly being speeded up at the endless jobs. One day he

announced his intention to take an afternoon vacation and attend a funeral. His taskmaster objected.

“Why do you want to go to that funeral? You went to one only last week and you never were acquainted with either of the families.”

“Hamp” hesitated a moment. A half day’s release seemed wonderfully inviting.

“Well, to tell the truth,” said he, “about all the comfort I take is in going to funerals.”

The grim visaged old farmer who sits with bent shoulders guiding his slow moving pair of farm horses along the dusty road, reflects the stern realities of making ends meet—and perhaps a little bit more—as the tiller of a rocky New England farm. But the smartly dressed tourist may have far less of that mental flexibility which enables one to shift the processes of thought from that which is burdensome to that which renews the cheerfulness of youth. As an example of this capacity there is the incident of the field of oats.

The Story of the Field of Oats

A farmer was standing by the roadside looking disconsolately at his oat field which he somehow seemed to feel was a personal reproach. A cold wet season had had a most discouraging influence and there was promise of but a very small crop.

Along the highway came a well-known elderly citizen who would be sure to notice the oats and estimate them for just what they were worth. He stopped his horse and passed the customary salutations and seeming in no hurry, the conversation covered quite a range of local topics. The owner of the oat field began to breathe easier. Perhaps this man had not noticed the oats. He exerted himself to be agreeable to the traveler. The latter finally straightened his reins. The patient horse began to look expectant, slowly started up and then the blow fell, but not on the horse. His driver gave a comprehensive glance across the field.

“Your oats,” said he, “are short—but thin.”

For the benefit of the uninitiated it might be said that it is perfectly possible to secure

a fairly satisfactory yield of oats even if in short stalk, provided that there is a thick stand. From the foregoing it will be evident that the outlook in this case was very unfavorable.

Monotony is supposed, by those enlightened ones of the earth who reside in large cities, to be inevitably associated with rural life, but youth can generally be depended upon to provide a thrill now and then, even in the back woods.

The Kitchen Dance "Up the Branch"

One evening in late winter, three enterprising young men in search of diversion, decided to hire a horse and sleigh and attend a dance, which by some underground source they had heard was scheduled for that date at a farmhouse some three or four miles away "up the Branch."

Now, of course, the code of etiquette required these young gallants to engage a barge, pair of horses and driver and also invite three young ladies to accompany them. But

funds were scarce with them and relying upon what is now known as "nerve," they felt sure they could secure dancing partners among the girls who would be sure to be present.

Driving up to the door of the farmhouse with a flourish, they turned their horse over to the volunteer hostlers and joined the party. As they were good dancers and not burdened with bashfulness, they were not long in making acquaintances among the girls present and were soon enjoying themselves greatly. To be sure they noticed a marked lack of cordiality among the other boys, but they did not allow so trifling a matter as that to disturb them.

All pleasures came to an end and about three o'clock in the morning it occurred to the three young heroes, that as each of them was expected to be "on the job" that morning, it would be well to start for home and get a little sleep. So they called for their horse and making graceful acknowledgments to the young ladies for the pleasures of the occasion, they put on their top coats and took their places in the sleigh.

The horse was quite restive and apparently in much haste to start. One of the trio took the reins and the volunteer hostler, giving the horse his head, they started at a fast pace homeward.

It was very dark and deep snows of the winter, now mostly melted away, had left a rather uneven roadbed. There were frequent deep depressions into which the rapidly moving sleigh would sink with nerve-racking concussions. One of the passengers protested to the driver.

"What's the use in driving so fast?" said he. "My teeth are all getting loose."

The driver tugged on the reins.

"I don't understand the nature of the beast," he said. "Here, get hold of the reins with me and see if we can't make him slow down a little."

They tugged at the reins with all their combined strength, but apparently it only made the horse go faster. Accordingly they gave their principal attention to getting through the "cradle holes" with as little shock as possible. The fast pace of the horse was rapidly

bringing them toward their home town and they soon saw the street lights. The horse evidently had but one object and that was to get the job over with and reach the stable and his own comfortable stall.

Moving down a long street at a very fast pace, the horse made a sudden sharp turn toward his stable. The sleigh, skidding violently across the wide, icy street, struck the curb and capsized, throwing the three heroes of the dance out upon the sidewalk together with the sleigh robes and other equipment.

The horse, with the sleigh still attached, then dashed up the street at a mad gallop toward the stable.

Gathering themselves up, somewhat shaken and bruised, but not seriously marred by their experience, the devoted three picked up the robes and blankets and made their limping way to the stable.

They found the horse and somewhat shattered sleigh being inspected by a much disgusted looking stable man.

“What’s the matter with you fellows, anyway?” said he. “Don’t you know enough to harness a horse?”

The light of the lantern solved the mystery of the wild ride home from the dance. The obliging volunteer hostler had carefully refrained from putting the bit in the horse's mouth.

After paying the bill for damages sustained by the sleigh, the young adventurers decided that the boys "up the Branch" had evened the score.

The New Maple Sugar Tub

Not far from the scenes of the above comedy, there lived on a little farm, an elderly man of very thrifty habits. He took great pride in the maple sugar he produced. Deciding to have the family supply all in one large receptacle, he had a can made by a local tinsmith to contain two or three hundred pounds of the finest maple sugar. This was filled at the proper season and stored in an attic at the head of a long flight of stairs. Several people of the vicinity were invited to inspect that new sugar tub and its contents.

One day a great misfortune came to the farm. The house caught on fire. There was

very little water available with which to fight it and it made rapid headway. It was soon evident that there was no hope of saving the building, so sympathetic neighbors helped to remove such of the contents of the house as could be carried out before it was too late. The old man was naturally much broken up and while they were looking upon the ruins, expressed his regret that he had lost that tub of sugar. Someone said:

“I thought you were up there in the attic. Why didn’t you roll it down stairs?”

The old man turned a rueful countenance and said:

“I thought of doing that, but I was afraid it would jam the tub up to let it bump down those stairs.”

A Yankee Philanthropist

And now by contrast with the simple soul who took such pride in his new, shiny, sugar tub, there is the story of another type of Yankee whose business shrewdness had made him a marked man in the community, even in the days of comparative youth. Cool, calcula-

lating and with unerring judgment, all his various enterprises prospered, and he was looked upon with wholesome respect as a man who lived up to his contracts and expected the same of others. This man shipped live-stock to the Boston market and on a certain warm day in midsummer was to send away a carload of fat hogs collected from the surrounding farm neighborhood.

It is important that fat hogs intended for shipment be kept cool. Among those who appeared at the proper time to make delivery, was a man from a little farm away up on the mountain top. He had a very fat hog which promised to weigh heavily and produce a handsome financial return. Somehow he had been careless and allowed the hog to make the journey in the hot sun without sufficient protection. At the first glance the experienced buyer saw the hog was overcome with the heat and told the owner that he could not accept it. The poor farmer was stupefied but an inspection of the sick porker showed him that the shipper was justified in his rejection. He was very much cast down

and said that he had been depending upon the proceeds of that hog to meet a pressing obligation. The shrewd Yankee buyer in his cool imperturbable manner noting his distress, turned to his assistant:

“Harry,” said he, “make out a check for the amount as per weigh bill,” which was promptly done.

The check was handed over to the farmer and he was instructed to take the hog, now in a state of collapse, to a remote corner of the adjoining meadow, kill and bury it.

And yet, had anyone accused the hog buyer of being a philanthropist, he would have represented the idea promptly.

Another instance of philanthropy, bearing upon the same important article of commerce, left a somewhat different impression.

The Butcher Who Was Too Generous

In a certain thriving town a meat dealer had gradually acquired a wide acquaintance. As he was a genial man with a ready sense of humor, he was regarded with general favor

by outlying farmers as well as by his local customers.

A man who had a farm back on the hills came to this dealer one day and contracted to deliver to him on a certain date an unusually fine specimen of dressed pork, guaranteed to be as near perfection as the most fastidious customer could require.

The appointed day arrived and likewise the farmer and the hog, which being placed upon the scales presented an attractive picture, at least from the standpoint of those who like pork. The dealer seemed well pleased.

“My wife said it was a shame for me to sell this hog,” said the farmer as the dealer started to adjust the scales, “she said she wanted that hog’s head for ‘sowse.’”

“Oh! she did,” said the dealer, “well, I will make her a present of it.”

The butcher immediately proceeded to decapitate the hog and wrapping the head up in coarse brown paper, handed it over to the delighted farmer who was overwhelmed at such unexpected generosity. The butcher then weighing the hog, figured a moment on a slip

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of paper and turning to the till counted out the amount coming for the meat at the agreed upon rate.

When the farmer handed the hog's head to his much surprised spouse she inquired:

“How much did the hog weigh?”

“It didn't seem to weigh up as much as I expected,” said the farmer. “I thought it would weigh twenty-five or thirty pounds more than it did.”

The woman looked at her husband suspiciously.

“Did the butcher weigh the hog before or after he cut off the head?”

“He weighed it afterwards.”

The comments of the wife when she found out the real significance of the “present” she had received, may be imagined. The value of the head would normally be about one third as much by the pound as the entire carcass.

CHAPTER II

RELATING TO CERTAIN CONJUGAL INFELICITIES

THE capacity of New England housewives for self-sacrificing devotion to family has been made evident by many a biographical history of favorite sons. When the father and mother are both united in the common purpose of giving their children opportunities which were perhaps almost wholly denied to themselves, it is seldom that serious conjugal differences arise.

But, unfortunately, there are some whose natural good intentions are easily undermined by their distaste for that monotony so commonly associated with carrying out any worthwhile plan.

Why Dave Left Home

In a certain rural district there was a man known familiarly to his acquaintances as "Dave." He had a wife and several children,

also a small farm. To all appearances Dave and his rather unprepossessing appearing wife lived on amicable terms. Both were frugal, industrious, and regarded as well meaning people. Therefore it was with great surprise that the community learned that Dave had disappeared under circumstances that admitted of no doubt that he had acted deliberately.

Although badly upset by Dave's unwarranted action, his wife was determined to keep her little family together and carry on the farm as a means of support. Admiring her grit the neighbors showed their kindness in many helpful ways and thus encouraged, the deserted family managed to complete the yearly cycle in tolerable comfort.

During all this time Dave's disappearance was a continual source of conjecture to the neighborhood. Nothing had been heard of him since that early morning when he had been seen walking rapidly down the road a mile or two away from home.

One evening a man who lived on a farm adjoining the one now being conducted by Mrs. Dave, was reading the weekly news-

paper. Suddenly there was a faint tapping at a nearby window. Laying down his paper the farmer proceeded to raise the sash. Seeing no one he asked who had rapped. There was a hesitating step forward and a shadowy figure appeared.

“Say,” said the visitor, “can’t you put on your hat and walk over home with me? It’s me, Dave. I’ve just got back and I’d feel a little easier about showing up to the Old Lady if you were along.”

So modest a request could hardly be denied. So the neighbor helped to restore Dave to the tolerance if not the good graces of his wife. On the way to his unsuspecting family, Dave was apologetically garrulous, explaining how he had been working some distance away and could not very well leave his job. As he rambled on making an evident attempt to excuse himself, his companion’s patience became exhausted and he turned to Dave with the logical question to be asked by any honorable citizen.

“Dave,” said he, “that’s all very well that you have been telling me, but what I want to

know is, how you could sneak off the way you did and leave your family?"

Dave hesitated and then proceeded to pass out an excuse that probably caused more local feminine indignation than the actual sin of abandonment had ever done in all the surrounding region.

"I guess it was a kind of mean trick," said Dave. "That morning I went off I had no real notion of going. But you see after I had got up, got dressed, and started the fire, I happened to look in the bedroom where my wife was lying asleep, hair all frowzy, mouth wide open, and snoring so you could hear her out in the road."

Dave hesitated.

"Do you know," said he, "she looked so awful homely I just felt as if I couldn't stand it any longer."

It is probable that having variously contributed to supplying the needs of the abandoned family for an entire year, the indignant women before mentioned were careful not to express their views in the hearing of Dave's wife. At any rate the historian mentions no

further gaps in the family happiness. So it may be assumed that the couple lived in perfect accord thereafter.

And now, having brought this episode to a delightful ending, it is the more to be regretted that another rupture of conjugal domesticity had a very different conclusion. In this case it was the beloved wife who wandered from home and fireside.

The Discouraging Matrimonial Experiences of Bill Jordan

A middle-aged man of good habits but limited executive ability had acquired a small farm on which he lived and kept house for himself. It was a very uneventful life but "Bill" was well seasoned to monotony. As frequently happens this monotony was suddenly interrupted, and as might also be expected, by a woman. Although of unknown antecedents, the lady was bland and ingratiating. She seemed to discover many attractive qualities in Bill which he had never dreamed of possessing heretofore. It is unnecessary to linger over

details. A wedding took place at an extremely early date.

Life now seemed worth living and Bill was a happy man. His wife was a good cook and he was a good provider. But somehow the wife did not seem to enjoy her husband's society exclusively and began to make other acquaintances chiefly of the male persuasion. Among them was a gay and debonair widower known as "Jim" who appeared to have much more leisure than Bill had. And when Jim struck out some time later to secure a better paying job in another state, Mrs. Bill decided to go along too.

Bill made no attempt to trace the missing couple, but went back to the old way of living without complaint. When friends told him he was well rid of such a baggage, Bill thought of the good suppers she used to get for him and was mute. For months nothing was heard of the missing spouse, but at last there were developments which can perhaps be best explained in the language of a faithful friend of Bill's, a French-Canadian, named "Joe."

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“I seen Bill on the street and I say to him: ‘Bill, what makes you look so glum; your wife come back?’ ”

“‘No,’ ” Bill say, “‘he ain’t come back no more; he dead,’ ”

“I say, ‘Aw gwan, Bill! What makes you tink he dead?’ ”

“‘I seen heem on der paper.’ ”

“I say, ‘Aw you don’t want ter believe all you see in der paper, Bill. Dey got to print some lies for fill heem up.’ ”

It appeared that Bill had that morning received a letter from some alleged friend of the strayed woman which contained a clipping mentioning the decease of Mrs. Bill and requesting that forty dollars be advanced for burial expenses, a sum modestly designed to come within the financial capacity of the bereaved husband.

Greatly against the advice of his friend, Joe, Bill insisted on forwarding the forty dollars, after which he resumed his daily routine of attending to his farm and cooking his meals. And again after many months was the same routine interrupted.

One afternoon just as Bill had kindled a new fire in the cook stove, so that his supper could be preparing while he was milking his cows, there came a rapping at the door, which being opened revealed the presence of Mrs. Bill, very much alive and wearing the smile which had been so attractive while it lasted. Naturally there were explanations to be made, but Mrs. Bill soon made it apparent that she had been a sad victim of deception. And when she told Bill to go along and do his milking and she would show him the best supper on his table that he had seen since she went away, Bill was ready to let bygones be bygones. He went to the barn and hustled his various duties, not even grudging the forty dollars of which he had been beguiled for the flimflam funeral. But his jubilation was short lived. No delicious supper was awaiting his return. His wife was missing; likewise forty-six dollars in the bureau drawer which Bill had been carefully saving up little by little for taxes.

Thus did romance fade, and while it must be admitted that in this depressing narrative of a woman's guile there are many suggestions of humor, it is a sordid tale at best. But in another instance of sadly impaired confidence, the victim's faith in a faithless wife was restored to remain unshaken, thus establishing in concrete form the formula that ignorance can really be bliss of a certain quality at least.

Another Tale of a Confiding Husband

Hosea W— was the possessor of a small property left to him by his deceased wife who had inherited it from a notoriously frugal father. Hosea was an amiable, simple minded person of very limited earning capacity. Noting his loneliness after his wife's death, Hosea was marked out as a worth-while "prospect" by a widow, to whom to apply the term "designing" would be very inadequate indeed. Of a gracious personality and a keen intellect, it was probably only because of a reluctance to leave familiar scenes that she failed to become another Cassie Chadwick.

As before stated, the widow classified Hosea as being worth her consideration. He had certain small possessions, including a home, and she was practically without a penny. To resolve was to act. The conquest was easy and before the community had any more than a suspicion of the real situation, the marriage knot had been tied.

To have a real home of her own after years of poverty was an agreeable change. But there was a fly in the ointment. Although an adoring husband, Hosea was not only vacant minded, but very economical. The honeymoon, while a rapturous state of affairs to Hosea, became very insipid to his broadly experienced wife. She resolved upon a solution that would both rid herself of a tiresomely ardent husband and give her possession of his property.

She thereupon began to take careful note of certain eccentricities frequently revealed by her spouse. With the data thus collected, she succeeded in persuading a physician that Hosea was in urgent need of mental treatment and secured a certificate to that effect.

The next move was to take the unsuspecting husband on a little tour. Among the interesting towns visited was one in which was located a well-known retreat for the insane. The gracious bride suggested that they inspect the asylum. Shortly thereafter the husband found himself deprived of both wife and liberty.

News of this astonishing transaction spread rapidly. Indignation developed everywhere among old friends and neighbors. They said Hosea was foolish enough without doubt or he would never have married the widow, but that he was no more crazy now than he had always been. Application was made for a writ of *habeas corpus* and within a very few days the victim was set at liberty.

This rapid change in the order of events was made possible by the fact that the county court was in session. After Hosea had appeared before the judge he received quite an ovation. One by one his friends congratulated him on having not only escaped from a nasty situation, but on having also plenty of evi-

dence on which to base the divorce suit which was to follow.

Hosea expressed his gratitude for having such vigilant friends. He would send his wife packing in record time. Well pleased with themselves, the self-sacrificing neighbors returned to their various homes, picturing to each other the discomfiture of the widow, but they reckoned without their host.

A few days later the news was handed about that Hosea and the widow had "made up." She had convinced him that it was all a mistake. Love had conquered.

To consider this chapter complete at this stage would be to leave a somewhat painful impression upon the reader. This is as unnecessary as it is undesirable. In order therefore that this history of conjugal vicissitudes be made to reflect in greater accuracy that noble institution of matrimony, as it really is in so many happy households, let us speak of the experience of another agriculturalist known familiarly to his associates as a well disposed, amiable citizen with an exceedingly capable wife and promising family.

“Purty Bur-r-ds”

“Jim” lived on very harmonious terms with his better half, but he had one bad habit. When he had occasion to visit a nearby village for supplies, he was apt to linger rather late. Under these circumstances, his wife, with a proper understanding of the necessity of regularity in farm details, would milk the cows. It is not of course to be expected that she did this very willingly, but she would do it if the occasion seemed to require it.

Late one evening in autumn, an acquaintance of Jim’s, passing by his establishment, was surprised to see Jim driving his cows in from the pasture, same being presumptive evidence that they had not been milked. As he passed the gateway he met Jim face to face.

“It seems to me you are pretty late getting in your cows, Jim,” was the remark.

“Yes,” said Jim, “it’s pretty late. I have just got back from town.”

“Do you have to milk ‘em all yourself?”

“No,” said Jim, “me wife can milk if she’s a mind to.”

"What's the matter tonight?" was the natural query.

"Oh! she's mad at me tonight," said Jim, "she says she's good and tired of doing the milkin' and me loafin' 'round the town."

"Well, Jim," said the traveler, who knew Mrs. Jim and admired her spunk, "when the women get their backs up we have to do about as they say."

"It's right ye are," said Jim, "they know how to raise the devil himself when they feel that way. They are purty bur-r-ds but they have their outs!"

It will be noted by the reader that Jim accepted the inevitable which was certainly the proper attitude. Every normal husband appreciates the fact that the advantages of matrimony greatly outweigh any associated drawbacks. In fact there is an occasional husband who seems to appreciate it too much, which is abundantly illustrated in another legend of rural New England, long since forgotten by most of the local inhabitants.

“Seven Wives and Seven Prisons”

A young woman had continued to linger in the parental household until she had considerably passed the average age of marriage. Somehow the young men of her acquaintance had failed to appreciate her. Therefore it was all the more gratifying when a recent arrival in the community, a man of ingratiating appearance, began to pay her marked attentions. Her romantic impulses which had been subdued by untoward circumstances, could now be given full sway. Her admirer was impetuous and would hear of no delays, and they were soon married.

The historian does not furnish any details of the honeymoon nor how long it lasted, but it would appear that the bride, although of a clinging nature, was very curious as to her husband's antecedents, and this, unfortunately, was the weak spot in his armour. The more the aforesaid antecedents were investigated, the more unattractive they proved to be and within a very short time the bride indignantly refused to have any further deal-

ings with her husband, incidentally starting a line of inquiry with startling results; the man was apparently a bigamist.

With indefatigable zeal, the bride and her disgusted parents continued their investigations which soon resulted in the bridegroom being snugly established in the local jail.

Then followed a remarkable series of revelations. A wife was discovered at about every turn in the crooked path of the prisoner, who engaged a lawyer and resigned himself to the inevitable.

Some months were to elapse before a regular session of court and in the meantime the bridegroom found time hanging heavily on his hands. Apparently the game was up and, with the inordinate vanity of certain criminal minds, he decided to write an autobiography. In due course of time there appeared a remarkable book, entitled, "Seven Wives and Seven Prisons," which created a sensation. It also aroused much local feminine indignation, because, in his desire to "get even" with his last wife, whom he regarded as responsible for his present misfortunes, the bigamist de-

clared in his book that of all the wives he had ever had, she was not only the most disagreeable, but also the homeliest and the most generally unattractive.

Apparently masculine depravity could go no further.

The French-Canadian Who Wanted a “War for the Womens”

Owing to the frailties of poor human nature, it often happens that even the most docile of husbands when disciplined, justifiably, of course, by their life partners, will seem to resent it. This is no doubt due to a yet remaining trace of that philosophy of the stone age which made the husband regard his wife as being subject to correction by himself. Of course with most enlightened husbands this quality, if it exists, is merely atavistic.

“Pete” was pretty well Americanized, but under stress of a little excitement was apt to have relapses of his early struggles with his verbs, singulars and plurals, etc. He was an estimable citizen in many ways and fully

appreciated by his wife, a buxom lady who could, however, show a terrorizing sense of indignation on occasions when "Pete" had lingered too long with the bottle.

One of these interviews had just occurred and his wife's disapproval had reached a new high record. A neighbor happened along just as the lecture was finished and "Pete" ambling somewhat uncertainly and disgustedly toward his barn was heard muttering to himself:

"Ought to be a war for the womens; too many womens; kill off some of the womens."

But Pete was always glad to accept the olive branch and with his own natural good sense and the loyal regard and good judgment of his wife as factors, domestic felicity was always restored as soon as the sobering up process was ended.

Thus it appears that conjugal life, often looked upon with great skepticism by certain unmarried people, too cautious for their own good, as being monotonous in the extreme, is very frequently much the reverse; also that, generally speaking, husbands, especially of ad-

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vanced age, will agree that they have deserved most of the wifely discipline they have experienced in their married lives, although they may, especially if in a certain part of New England, quote to prospective husbands, from the old time song:

“Ah! young man, how little you know,
What trials do from wedlock flow.
You have a few days and nights of ease,
And then you’ve a scolding wife to please.”

CHAPTER III

LEGENDS OF THE ECCENTRIC

THE unusual mental twist which frequently escapes notice in the crowded city, is often the center of interest in a rural neighborhood. Those who thus excite morbid curiosity in their youth are indeed unfortunate and often suffer keenly from the semi-ostracism which sometimes follows. But the elderly who have developed unusual characteristics seem on the contrary to rather pride themselves upon their peculiarities, holding the view of the ancient Quaker who is reported to have said one day to his wife: "Everyone is queer but me and thee; and thee is some queer."

Of the various minor misfortunes to which the elderly are subject, perhaps deafness is the most to be dreaded. This is illustrated in the case of the elderly country merchant.

"You Don't Have to Yell at Me"

Mr. H— was the prosperous owner of a general store and had about everything he

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needed except normal hearing. He was deaf, unmistakably deaf, but with the pathetic obstinacy of some thus afflicted, he would not admit it.

Late one afternoon a well-known citizen called at the store on an errand for his wife. Others were waiting as the following transaction was pulled off, and not strange to say, seemed to find it rather amusing.

"I want a half pound of cream tartar."

The storekeeper seemed unusually impressed.

"Freem Parker," said he. "What's happened to him?"

Freeman Parker was a well known and popular citizen of the vicinity.

"A half pound of cream tartar, I said," the customer replied, raising his voice.

"Freem Parker is dead," said the merchant.

"Why, when did it happen?"

"I want a half pound of CREAM TAR-TAR," was the reply in a very loud voice.

"Oh! you want cream tartar, do you," said the dealer in icy tones.

"You don't need to yell at me. I'm not deaf."

As before suggested, it is good policy in a rural district to cultivate reasonably cordial relations with one's neighbors. Therefore it was probably poor tactics for a certain exasperated farmer to set a bear trap in his corn crib. To be sure, he was eminently successful, finding an exceedingly undesirable citizen the next morning securely fastened by one hand in the savage jaws of the trap. But it may be taken for granted that the farmer, who released the man at once, must have felt easier when the man left the neighborhood which it is hoped he soon did. Another farm owner was much more diplomatic.

The Story of the Stolen Bundle of Hay

In this instance there was an exhibition of forbearance and strategy much to be admired.

Finding the barn door open one morning in the late winter, the farmer was at a loss to understand how the fastenings became loosened. Further inspection showed that hay had been thrown down from the loft. Still further examination revealed signs that hay had been

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carried away, presumably in a bundle on somebody's shoulders.

A couple of mornings later there was further evidence of the same petty thieving. The farmer decided to watch and see what happened. As it was fairly comfortable sleeping on the hay rolled up in a blanket, the adventure assumed a considerable degree of entertainment.

About midnight the farmer was aroused by someone carefully opening the barn door. It was too dark to identify the intruder and in fact the farmer did not want to know who of his nearby acquaintances could stoop to anything so contemptible.

The thief had a long rope which in the dim light he laid upon the floor of the barn. He next piled on as much hay as he could well carry on his shoulders, and tying it up with the rope, he hastened away.

The farmer watched the man crossing the field. Suddenly an idea came to him; he did not want to have trouble with a neighbor and he did not want to lose any more hay. Following at a little distance behind the thief,

his footsteps naturally unheard because of the rustle of the hay, the farmer struck a match and held it up to the bundle for an instant and then dodged behind a tree. A moment later the hay burst into flames. The thief dropped his rope and, screaming with terror, rushed from sight. It was evident that he regarded the fire as of supernatural origin. The farmer lost no more hay.

Another farmer met a similar problem in a rather different manner. He was not overburdened with tender solicitude for ne'er-do-wells, as the following record will show.

The Raid on Jim Green's Pork Barrel

Jim Green was the sort of agriculturalist who worked hard by day and slept hard by night. It therefore required several successive attempts one very early morning before his more wakeful wife succeeded in arousing him.

“Wake up! wake up!” said she, in a loud whisper, meanwhile nudging her sleeping husband vigorously.

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"Why—why, what's the matter?" said Jim.

"There's somebody in the cellar," she whispered, "I've been hearing strange noises for several minutes."

Jim was now wide awake and hastily slipping on a few clothes, he made his way to a window and in the dim light soon made out the figure of a man crouched down by the cellar window, evidently working with a partner. Further strain of the eyes revealed a pile of what Jim's experienced vision showed him to be salt pork, lying on the ground at the man's elbow. Jim tiptoed to a side door, opened it quietly and made his way as silently as possible to where the man was kneeling. But the slight rustle of his clothing or the jar of his footsteps alarmed the watcher at the window and, glancing over his shoulder, he hastily dodged around the corner of the wood shed.

Jim promptly took the missing man's place by the cellar window and awaited developments. Shortly thereafter a man in the cellar came to the window by which Jim was crouching and passed out several pieces of

very damp salt pork which Jim received silently.

"I've got all there is in the barrel," he whispered, "except the last layer. Probably we better leave that so the folks here won't be entirely out of pork."

"No," Jim whispered, "pull it all out; what do we care whether they have any pork or not?"

The man in the cellar went back and, plunging his arm deep in the clammy brine, succeeded in digging up the last layer of pork which he brought to the window, passing it up to the owner outside. He then climbed out of the cellar window himself, where he was promptly collared by Jim and identified as a shiftless farm laborer of the neighborhood. He was soon released, however, after he had revealed the name of his partner, another bird of similar feather.

Not until long after the two prowlers had removed from the neighborhood, did Jim tell the story. Neighbors then remembered that when Jim Green needed farm help, the two pork thieves always responded promptly.

Comparatively few city born people realize how important a factor the weather is in the daily routine of the farmer. They know that a long-continued drought causes short crops and that floods sometimes do considerable damage in certain valleys. Of the inconvenience caused by unwelcome showers which sometimes become epidemic in busy seasons, they have no knowledge. In a certain thriving farming section, there had been a series of sudden thunder showers which had been very discouraging to hay makers.

How Lote Platt Beat the Thunder Shower

“Lote” Platt had grown somewhat irascible in his old age and weather eccentricities had gradually become a personal matter with him. When unceremonious thunder showers had soaked a certain crop of clover hay about the third or fourth time, Lote began to feel peevish. However, he spread the hay out to dry and after one wet surface had responded to the sun’s rays, he turned the other side up and early in the afternoon

found the clover in prime order to go in the barn.

He hastened to rake it into long windrows and was just preparing to send his hired man after the oxen and cart when he heard the grumbling of thunder and felt the coolness of the rain breeze. Another shower was coming!

The hired man started on the run to get the oxen, but Lote soon realized that the shower, and apparently a very wet one too, was going to reach the hay field long before the oxen could be gotten there.

“Boo-boo,” said Lote, as an unusually loud peal of thunder made the air vibrate. “I’ll show you something you never thought of.”

Lote was at the extreme windward side of the field and the long rows of freshly raked hay stretched out before the strong breeze, the forerunner of the approaching storm. Dropping on one knee, Lote scratched a match, shielded it a moment with his old straw hat and then held the blaze to the end of the windrow. Fanned by the wind, the fire followed the long row of dry hay across

the field. Then another blaze followed by others also, and when the shower arrived, the clover which had cost so much labor to be fitted for the hay mow, had ceased to be a problem.

When the proverbially amiable citizen bursts forth in rage, it is astonishing to those who look on, and apt to be quite disconcerting to a perfectly innocent victim. It certainly was to the lumberjack who was "bawled out" by Uncle Jimmy Ryan.

The Tale of the Old-Fashioned "Settle"

A logging enterprise was under way back along the edge of the mountain and Uncle Jimmy's wife was induced by the boss to board some of the help. A newcomer had joined the gang and was informed at quitting time that arrangements had been made for him to join the others at Uncle Jimmy's.

The new recruit made his way with a half dozen other husky workers to the little low roofed farm house and going into the combined kitchen, dining and living room, dropped

his bag in a corner, tossing his overcoat on one end of what seemed to be a large chest along the wall back of the cooking range.

Uncle Jimmy, a short and roly-poly man of sixty-five or so, was moving blandly about, speaking to one and then another of the "guests," when suddenly his eye fell on the overcoat, hanging over one end of the chest. Rushing forward, he caught the coat and turning to the astonished man who owned it, proceeded to express great indignation, although in his excitement he had lapsed into the Irish brogue of his early days so that what he said was unintelligible.

Finally the wife who had kept serene during her husband's tirade, made the matter clear.

The "chest" was an old-fashioned "settle" with an adjustable back. It contained a mattress and at about five o'clock every day Uncle Jimmy's mother of ninety or more went to bed in the settle, the wooden back of which was shut down, closing tightly. A circular opening in the end, near the old lady's face, provided air circulation.

The lumberman had unknowingly closed the opening. The offender apologized and harmony was restored.

There is no place like the farm for those unfortunates whose ability to perform crude manual labor is their chief asset. The farmer who must exercise a never failing forbearance in the management of horses and cattle often extends his sympathetic supervision over the mentally defective ones who can be utilized in providing the necessary hand labor. Thus it came about that one of those grown up children had found a comfortable home at Mr. Hubbard's.

The Lost Harrow Teeth

Thomas was socially inclined and the boys of the community were too kindly disposed to exclude him from their company.

The owner of a nearby farm had been "seeding down" a stumpy addition to his pasture, and early in the summer some boys, including Thomas, wandered in that direction one Sunday afternoon, discovering a small

wooden harrow with iron "teeth," which had been left on the field until a more convenient season. The shrinking of the wood in the summer sun had loosened these teeth and a few of them had dropped out. Thus it came about that the boys were afflicted with a wonderfully funny idea.

A few mornings later Mr. Perry, the owner of the harrow and incidentally of several farms in the neighborhood, had occasion to drive up to Mr. Hubbard's place on business. It was but a short distance and he could easily have walked, but for the fact that he was very lame.

Mr. Hubbard was at home, and receiving his visitor very cordially, they entered into an earnest conversation. The child of misfortune, Thomas, came around the corner of an outbuilding and seeing the two men so busily occupied, stopped at once. He seemed to be much agitated.

The conversation continued, the two neighbors, however, subconsciously watching the boy. Suddenly he rushed forward.

“You old lame cuss!” said he, addressing the astonished visitor.

“You old lame cuss! I don’t know anything about your harrow teeth.” He then dodged back out of sight.

The two men looked at each other in amazement.

“What do you suppose he means?” said Mr. Perry.

“I don’t know,” was the reply, “but I intend to find out.”

“Here, you, Thomas!” he called, “come back here.”

The boy came reluctantly forward, and after some questioning revealed that the boys in their holiday spirit of mischief had concealed the loose harrow teeth in a hollow stump near where the harrow lay as a joke on the Perry boys—a trifling matter in itself but which had assumed great and terrifying importance to poor unfortunate Thomas.

To speak of the childish wrath of the aged is misleading in its suggestiveness. More properly we should refer to the childish wrath

of the old man; for it is an undeniable fact that elderly women exhibit much greater patience with the inevitable annoyances of life than old men do.

A popular cartoonist has frequently exhibited these sudden tactics of impotent wrath in a very amusing way. But his imagination never has suggested anything more violent in its explosiveness than Uncle Reuben's rage at a balky "salt shake."

The Story of the Salt Shake

Uncle Reuben and his more amiable wife were visiting with relatives. His hostess was one of the New England type who never could do enough for her guests.

Uncle Reuben who was quite advanced in years and whose habitual irritability had proportionally increased, was feeling unusually peevish this morning. It was midsummer and exceedingly warm and humid.

The contents of the glass salt shake allotted to this peevish old gentleman had become, like everything else, affected by the prevailing humidity. The most vigorous shaking failed

to produce any results. After repeated attempts, Uncle Reuben paused and quietly examined the salt shake which he held in his hand. His amiable wife, knowing his characteristics, looked anxious. His kindly hostess, also well acquainted with the aforesaid characteristics, looked deeply concerned.

Finally Uncle Reuben spoke in those tones of forced calmness which are usually associated with some great crisis.

“Pauline,” said he, “I wish to buy this salt shake.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t sell it,” replied his hostess, “you may have it, and welcome.”

“No, I want to buy it!” said Uncle Reuben in dramatic tones.

“I want to buy it. I want to take it out to the stone pile and grind it to powder.”

“Better Give Them to Some Poor Boy”

Just because a man has to be supported as a public charge by the town he lives in, is no reason why he should not have some definite ideas about correct dress.

“Uncle Timmy” may have seen better days, but it was so far back in his history that no one remembered anything about it. He was supplied with board in a private family at the town’s expense, the poor master incidentally providing two other urgent necessities, *viz.*, wearing apparel and chewing tobacco, the latter being purchased in quantity and “doled out” to Uncle Timmy little at a time, as otherwise the expense of this luxury would have reached a very large item in the course of a year.

About once in so often Uncle Timmy would happen around to see the poor master to talk things over. He was very sociable indeed and would go into all the details as to the menu at his boarding place, which was very seldom satisfactory.

One day Uncle Timmy appeared, and after he had given a report of how he was enjoying his present boarding place, it occurred to the poor master that a certain pair of misfit shoes, which were of no special value to anyone, might be utilized by this long-time guest of the community. So he brought out

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the shoes and suggested that Uncle Timmy take them home with him.

The old man turned the shoes over and over and examined them carefully. When it was suggested that he try them on, as apparently they would fit him, he shook his head.

“No,” said he. “I guess I won’t take them. You better give them to some poor boy.”

There is no doubt that Uncle Timmy was naturally an aristocrat.

CHAPTER IV

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS AND SMALL TOWN LIFE

THOSE sections of rural New England which have possessed natural advantages sufficient to restrain the young people from their common propensity to emigrate to the cities or to the western states, are rich in family legends which show that frequent persistence of family traits which is exceptionally pronounced in the six little states of the northeast.

A well-known family had occupied a prominent position in a certain New England town for several generations. During all this period certain pronounced characteristics had afforded amusement to the people of the community, especially those of the father and daughter whose mental processes are illustrated by the following narratives.

The Young Man Who Had “Speerit”

The father had reached quite an advanced age, and although very amiable, had become

exceedingly economical. There were people who would have said he was stingy—a common enough accusation against the aged. Besides his commodious house in town, he had a small farm and every spring he looked about and engaged some young man to undertake the double rôle of handy man around the house and farm laborer. The boy who took that job could be always sure of steady occupation; he was expected to rise early and work late.

One spring the old gentleman succeeded in securing a perfect treasure. A boy of eighteen years or thereabouts was engaged from a distant farm and came to town prepared to enjoy, what was to him, metropolitan life. A naturally willing worker, he soon found that there was little opportunity for recreation, at least during the daylight hours. In time he gradually made acquaintances who soon confirmed his own opinion that he was being imposed upon. He was still in awe of his employer, however, but finally an occasion developed when he could restrain himself no longer. On a very hot evening, after a hard

day on the farm, he was directed to go into the wood shed and saw up some very dry fire wood of various uneven lengths. This was too much, and with a fluency which absolutely astonished both himself and listener, he proceeded to tell his employer just what he thought of his stinginess. For several minutes the old man stood perfectly amazed, the boy meantime hastening to his room, where he put on his best clothes and went up town. He naturally expected to be discharged, but such was not the case. After thinking the matter over a few minutes, the old man began to chuckle to himself, after which he shuffled off up the street, telling one citizen after another of his recent extraordinary experience.

"I like that boy," said he. "He has speerit."

The Lady Who Secured a Wardrobe

This old gentleman had a wife who was in delicate health and a middle-aged daughter who was not delicate. She was a very capable housekeeper and as a rule not socially inclined. She stayed at home month after

month, year after year and finally her married sister and sister-in-law, neither of whom were reluctant to point out the path of duty to their amiable parent, insisted that it was only right that "Sally" should have a vacation. They pictured out the need of change of scene, incidentally laying particular stress upon the even greater need of a replenished wardrobe. The old gentleman was very reluctant to yield to their persuasions, especially in the matter of the appropriation for clothes. It gave him a pang to pass over the money necessary for the outfit, but under such effective concurrent pressure, the outcome can easily be imagined. He finally resigned himself to the inevitable, wrote a handsome check and costumers were put to work.

While these numerous family discussions were going on, "Sally" had seemed to show but a languid interest. This was attributed by her sisters to the fact that she had stayed at home so long that she didn't want to go anywhere else. In the light of subsequent events it would appear that their diagnosis was correct.

After the first pangs of separation from the cash, the father began to take an extraordinary interest in the outfitting process. He passed his judgment on the different fabrics, the styles into which they were to be made up and seemed to be looking forward with anticipation to the time when "Sally" would start out on her vacation trip with a wardrobe equal to that of any woman who had left that town in a long time.

Finally the outfit of new dresses, coats, hats, and other essential articles was complete and the day was set when the vacation should begin.

According to the plans, Sally was to go to New York to meet a family friend, visiting other points of interest as her impulses might suggest. The day of departure arrived, and Sally's father was alive to the situation. A maid had been secured for a certain limited engagement and she was called early and told to prepare breakfast. The old man knocked vigorously on Sally's door to make sure that she didn't oversleep. Breakfast was ready and Sally did not appear. Her father began

to be anxious lest she miss the train. He sent the maid up to knock at the door, who returned saying that Sally had answered, "All right." Still she did not appear and it began to be certain that if she went that day she would have to go on a later train. Her father was indignant at her unwarranted indolence. He went up stairs and pounded once more on Sally's door, which she opened, clad in her usual kitchen apparel. The old man demanded an explanation which was promptly forthcoming.

"I didn't have the slightest intention of going to New York any of the time, but I knew that the only way I could ever get you to furnish me with any decent clothes, was to pretend I was going. Now I have the clothes and I am glad to have them, and I am going to stay at home and you can pay up that maid and let her go about her business."

It must be regretfully stated that no record has been preserved of what Sally's feminine relatives had to say to her.

In certain social circles astonishing heraldic pedigrees make their appearance, heretofore all unsuspected by the average list of acquaintances, but there can be no camouflage about family pedigrees in a strictly rural neighborhood. An eminent financier in a New England town had a relative who did not add any prestige to the family escutcheon. Having little inclination to work and a very moderate earning power even when he did work, a small annuity which he received was greatly appreciated by this scion of a lofty family. For a short time after his quarterly allowance arrived, "Lafe" lived in luxury.

The Story of "Lafe" and the Livery Stable Man

A widely known hotel man of the community had as a side interest, a small but well equipped livery stable, which in the days before the automobile, was a handy source of income. On a certain sultry summer day who should ramble into the livery stable but Lafe. The owner happened to be at the office and Lafe negotiated with him for the use of

a horse and buggy, for a couple of hours. Knowing his man, the proprietor suggested that he had better pay in advance, as he himself might not be there when Lafe returned. This was but an agreeable detail to the man who was just then in funds and he passed out the money without any hesitation whatever, after which he took his seat in the buggy which had been run out of the barn preparatory to harnessing the horse to it.

As stated before, it was sultry and Lafe was not only oppressed by the heat, but also by several drinks he had enjoyed shortly before. He fell asleep. Therefore, when the horse was led out, it was decided that he better be led back into the barn again for a time and await developments. Lafe slumbered on, finally arousing himself just about the time when the two hours were up that he had contracted for. The livery stable man was not a trickster, but he greatly enjoyed a joke. He informed Lafe that he had had his ride so far as he was concerned, having occupied the buggy and having been in a position to use the horse, if he so desired. Lafe saw

the joke, and being a good loser he promptly went away with a broad grin on his face, resolving to "get even." The livery stable man industriously spread the story which came to Lafe's ears quite frequently.

Some months afterwards the stable owner happened to be about sixty miles away taking a train for home and behold there was Lafe, also taking the train. The memory of that unenjoyed but paid for ride was still lingering in Lafe's mind, so he asked the practical joker if he would not advance the money to pay his railroad fare.

"Why should you pay any railroad fares, when your cousin is a big owner in the railroad?" was the reply. "You just tell the conductor who you are and he will pass you without any ticket."

"Will you back me up, if I do tell him?" asked Lafe.

"Certainly," was the answer. "That will be all right."

Whereupon Lafe took his seat in the front end of the day coach, the livery stable man being seated with a friend in the back part



A SHADY DRIVE "DOWN EAST"

of the same car. Enter the conductor. He approached Lafe, demanding a ticket. Then followed a brief but animated conversation as a result of which Lafe turned and made a signal to the man in the rear of the car, who promptly nodded his head. The conductor therefore proceeded about his duties, collecting fares from various passengers, until he approached the livery man, who, stating his destination, handed him a mileage book. The conductor took the book and promptly detached two fares instead of one. When the owner of the mileage book asked the reason, he was informed by the conductor that he had been told by the man down in front that he would get his fare at the other end of the car and that he had confirmed the arrangement.

It may be taken for granted that among the habitues of the hotel and livery stable, the foregoing transactions were fully appreciated. Lafe was temporarily a hero, and no one enjoyed the joke better than the livery man did.

While it was regarded absolutely essential in small town life to be able, in New Eng-

land phrase, to "take a joke," there was of course a reasonable limit. A joke ceases to be a joke when there is any evidence of ill nature or maliciousness back of it. Just where the dividing line comes in of course varies with the circumstances.

In a certain rural town there was a young man whose tendency to slow wit was counterbalanced by a very amiable disposition. It is not surprising therefore that there should have been those who were inclined to take advantage and subject him to ridicule. This was less annoying to the victim of these jokes than to some of his friends.

The Man Who Wanted to Fight a Year Afterward

One election day, in early September, the amiable young man in question, after depositing his ballot and going down the stairs from the hall where the election was held, was intercepted by some local clown who, taking him entirely off his guard, kicked him down the last few steps of the stairway to the floor

below, where he landed in a very undignified attitude. With unruffled amiability the victim of horse play scrambled to his feet, brushed the dust from his clothes, and joined heartily in the empty laughter of the onlookers.

His close friends had not happened to witness this episode, but heard of it before leaving the hall. On their way home they expressed themselves very indignantly and asked the amiable victim why he submitted to such abuse, assuring him that he could easily make short work of the other man and there was no reason why he should put up with any such treatment. This put the matter in an entirely new light to the man who had shown such remarkable good nature a short time before. He thought deeply and said nothing.

The year rolled around and another September found the same assemblage at the town hall for the election. Everyone had forgotten the stairway incident of the year before, with one exception, and that was the victim. To the absolute amazement of all present, he hunted up his astonished antagonist of the year before and it required the combined

efforts of all the young man's friends to keep him from committing serious assault on the joker. He was restrained with some difficulty and taken to one side of the hall where his friends proceeded to explain to him that his grievance was now outlawed.

The trademark has become no small factor in modern business. Its imitation by rival firms is not only frowned upon as a breach of ethics, but in most civilized or even semi-civilized countries, it is illegal.

A Rural "Trademark"

There was one such violation, however, many years ago in a small town, none of whose inhabitants perhaps had ever before heard of such a thing as a "trademark" in its modern meaning.

One of the chief sources of income to farmers in that section was butter-making. At that time all butter was put down in wooden tubs, which were mostly hand made. An old growth spruce tree of good size and of a certain grain would be sawed into right

lengths. These would be split with great care into staves. These in turn would be shaved down as smoothly as possible, enclosed in ash hoops and fitted out with a cover, the rim of which was likewise an ash hoop.

An old man who had become quite skillful in manufacturing these butter packages, finally acquired such pride in his work that upon finishing each tub he would take a soft lead pencil and write his initials in large flourishing characters. As he was practically illiterate, his monogram was all the more amusing to others.

These packages were not only supplied to certain farmers, but were furnished to a nearby country store to be carried in stock. There were other builders of hand-made butter tubs who were not so careful about the finish of their articles.

One evening this creator of artistic butter tubs meandered to the village store. A wagish individual who saw him there and enjoyed his self-satisfied and expansive manner in the store, had one of those bright ideas which so frequently afflict humanity. In the

back room of the store there were some butter packages manufactured by a rival of the artist before mentioned. These tubs were a little more uncouth in their getup than usual. The maker of this brand of packages had the excellent taste not to identify himself with his completed product by any monogram. Selecting one of the roughest looking of these packages, the joker borrowed a pencil and soon produced a crude imitation of the well known initials. He then walked into the inner store, handed the butter tub to the rival manufacturer and asked him how he ever had the face to put out such coarse looking work as that. The artist indignantly denying any responsibility for the tub, or even knowledge thereof, his attention was immediately called to the trademark on the bottom.

This was the last straw and the creator of masterpieces in the butter-tub making art, nearly produced a riot. He accused the store-keeper of connivance and a gross fraud on the community and threatened dire proceedings in other directions. The disgusted proprietor of the store finally succeeded in ex-

plaining the matter. The perpetrator of the joke slipped out of the store by the back way and eventually the rumblings of wrath and outraged culture subsided.

It has been before stated that the satisfaction of living on fairly amicable terms with one's neighbors in a farming region tends to develop not only much forbearance but diplomacy as well. This was illustrated in a certain case where the bone of contention was a line fence.

An Early Example of Camouflage

A certain man who lived on a small farm had a perfect mania for lawsuits. This was not so uncommon in earlier days, as it was rather in the line of policy of certain pettifogging lawyers to encourage litigation.

Between his farm and the adjoining one there was a division fence which seemed to be always falling to pieces. The man who lived on this adjoining farm suspected that the cattle were not altogether to blame for the frequent breaches in the fence. The cattle

continued to come over onto his land and he finally decided to devote one whole day, if necessary, to watchful waiting. He therefore established himself in a clump of bushes where he had a pretty good view of quite a stretch of the fence, and not very long afterwards he saw the half grown son of the belligerent neighbor approach the division line and loosen some of the rails to such an extent that it would be an easy matter for the cattle to get across.

The man on guard was puzzled for a moment just what to do, but realized the importance of avoiding hostilities with his neighbor, if it were possible. Finally he had an inspiration.

The boy who had done the mischief was well known in the neighborhood as somewhat defective mentally. Hastily removing his old coat, which had a very dilapidated lining, the resourceful observer turned it inside out and again put it on, dragging his old felt hat down over his eyes. Next he rubbed a handful of black dirt over his face, after which with blood curdling yells, he started down the hills

toward the boy. One glimpse was enough for the youngster who fled to the house panic stricken. A little later on the diplomatist, resuming his normal appearance, apparently happened along in a leisurely way, repaired the fence and went home.

By a perhaps not unexplainable coincidence, the cattle remained on their own side of the fence thereafter.

“Noah Built the Ark”

In another locality there were four brothers whose personal traits were so markedly individual as to make the family stand out somewhat prominently in the community. All these amiable peculiarities were of course thoroughly understood by the local inhabitants. First one of the brothers and then another would figure in some transaction in a way to bring out the same family characteristic.

The oldest one of the four brothers bore the biblical name of Noah, and was a carpenter. Another brother often assisted him at the same trade. Still another brother was a farmer, while the fourth had no settled occupation.

NEW ENGLAND JOKE LORE

These amusing details of the various activities of these brothers finally inspired a local humorist to sum up the doings of the four in the following luminous example of rural verse:

“Noah built the Ark,
Seth laid the floor,
Jim drove the geese in,
And Tom shut the door.”

CHAPTER V

THE YANKEE TRADING INSTINCT AND SOME AMUSING EXAMPLES

IN the ordinary processes of trade the Yankee is a firm believer in the old Roman Law of "*caveat emptor*" or "let the buyer beware." While there may be occasional instances of neighborhood disapproval where this principle has been worked out to the discomfiture of the too confiding, in general it is held in respect as the only basis for sound business. That there can be a new dispensation whereby business can be carried on safely on the basis of a tender altruistic regard for the financial safeguarding of those who lack the ability to think for themselves, and thus produce that utopia which certain enthusiasts would seem to regard as possible, has yet to be demonstrated.

The Story of the Eccentric Cow

There was a man who wished to buy a cow. There was another man who had cows to sell. When the prospective buyer, known locally as

“Ed,” looked over the herd of the seller, his eye rested upon a certain cow which the latter was especially anxious to dispose of. He had indicated what he would take for several other cows, but had carefully refrained from making any reference to the particular cow. Noting this omission, the buyer gave the animal in question very special attention and asked the price. He was told that this cow was not for sale as she belonged to “Hannah,” his wife. Ed immediately became convinced that Hannah’s cow must be a very superior animal and lost all interest in the other quotations. However, he made very little headway at first, but finally the owner said he would go in and talk with his wife and see if she would consent to sell her cow. He went in the house and was gone quite some time, but finally appeared and said that his wife had consented to let the cow go, although it was apparent from his tone that she was very reluctant to part with it. The trade was soon made and Ed drove the cow home in triumph.

Shortly after the animal was established in her new home it was time to do the milking,

and the proud owner proceeded to begin the operation. He soon found that the cow was quite reluctant to be milked and when she had kicked the milk pail across the stable two or three times, he called on his hired man for help. Together they attempted to mollify the fractious animal but the results were far from satisfactory.

The next morning the same comedy was enacted and Ed became quite pessimistic. He decided that it was sort of a mean trick for a neighbor to wheedle a woman into giving up her favorite cow and he drove to the farm of the original owner and told him so. He carefully refrained from making any reference to the eccentricities shown by the cow, believing that by a master stroke of diplomacy in showing such consideration for the other man's wife, he might negotiate an exchange. The former owner listened to his remarks and again said that he would talk the matter over with his wife. Ed waited anxiously for the result. After an interval of ten or fifteen minutes the devoted husband once more made his appearance and informed Ed that Hannah had "got

over feeling bad" and decided she would not be selfish in the matter.

The new owner of the temperamental cow greatly regretted his haste in concluding the bargain before he had inquired more definitely as to the cow's disposition. But, realizing that a trade was a trade, he made the best of the matter and no doubt derived enough amusement by telling the incident to his numerous acquaintances to offset his financial loss. Had he asked the original owner the plain question if the cow objected to being milked, he would have been told the facts without doubt. But, noticing his eagerness to buy, irrespective of all ordinary rules of prudence, the original owner could not resist the temptation to drive a hard bargain.

In the earlier days of agriculture in New England, no farm of any size was regarded as properly equipped without a stalwart yoke of oxen, which were best adapted to the rough stumpy fields and relatively uneven highways. Although money was scarce, time was in ade-

quate supply. There followed the necessity of that great empire building vehicle, the ox-cart.

The Remarkable Incident of the Cart Wheels

There was a well-known resident of a certain rural community commonly referred to as "Uncle Reuben." Being a natural mechanic, he acquired an enviable reputation as a wheelwright who could turn out better cart-wheels than anyone in that region.

All the average farmer needed was the two wheels, which were built exactly alike; he could do the rest of the work himself in his spare time, the pole or "neap," as it was locally designated, being a simple affair, as also was the cart body.

To this master builder of cart-wheels there came one day a farmer from a remote mountain side and bargained for a pair which were to be paid for at some future time in farm products. The wheels were to be ready for delivery on the following Saturday week.

Uncle Reuben proceeded leisurely about his task, as work was rather slack, but completed

his job on the Friday preceding the promised date and turned out a rather better job than usual. That very afternoon a well-to-do farmer from a nearby valley drove up to engage a pair of cart-wheels and as soon as he entered the shop, his eyes fell upon those just completed. They were exactly what he wanted and he insisted upon having them. Uncle Reuben told him the wheels were already sold and who was to have them. The man of affluence was urgent. Uncle Reuben could make the mountain farmer another pair and as a clinching argument proposed to pay cash for the wheels. Uncle Reuben hesitated but the temptation of ready cash payment instead of merchandise was too much. He accepted the offer, the money was paid and that evening the purchaser sent his man for the wheels.

All the next day Uncle Reuben worked feverishly on another pair of cart-wheels for the original purchaser. As he worked he formulated the excuse he must offer to allay the other man's disappointment. Along in the afternoon the mountaineer appeared to get his wheels. He did not get the wheels of course, but he carried away a most unique excuse.

In his blandest manner Uncle Reuben explained the matter very clearly.

“Do you know,” says he, “I don’t see how in the world I could have done it, but when I had got the wheels all finished I found I had gone and built two right-hand wheels. A man came along who thought he could use them and I let them go.”

There is probably no more effective form of the so-called “pitiless publicity” than that which throws its calcium moral rays upon the unconventional resident of a rural community in New England. There can be little that transpires that is not only well known but carefully weighed in the balances. There is an illuminating legend which tells of an unwise battle with rural public opinion.

The Thrilling Experiences of a Mountain “Doctress”

A woman who with her husband and child had taken up her abode in a remote district was at first well received. She became interested in the little church and being of a bland disposition and an alert mind succeeded in

passing the censorship with comparative credit. Unfortunately for herself and child the husband died and soon there were rumors that she was not showing a proper sense of bereavement. The local atmosphere became chilly and she decided that she must do something to indicate proper devotion to her husband's memory.

About fifteen miles away, there was a distant cousin of her late husband who was a dealer in monuments. To him she appeared one day and mournfully announced her desire to erect a monument to her late husband. She admitted that she had no money to pay for it, but said she had a piece of land with a house upon it and that she would willingly sacrifice that property to ensure the creation of a suitable memorial. The dealer and incidental relative was very favorably disposed, not only to the ingratiating widow, but to what apparently was a promising venture. A trade was soon made, the widow departed and in a short time the monument was properly erected in the cemetery. Nothing was said at that time as to a transfer of the real

estate, but some weeks later the dealer being in the town where it was located, decided to take a look at his new property. He found a small irregular patch of rocks and bushes with a tumbledown rough board shanty upon it. A few inquiries soon made it clear that the joke was on him and he never made any move to secure a title. After a time the humor of the transaction overcame his disgust at the trick and he told the story on himself, to the great joy of those better acquainted with the characteristics of the widow.

It must be regretfully chronicled, however, that even the monument failed to reinstate the lady in the good graces of her feminine neighbors. She was lonely, very short of cash and possessed of an inventive mind; naturally there were developments. For years there was no lack of conversational topics in that community, at least among the women.

Shortly after the monument episode there appeared an imposing looking sign on the front of the widow's residence, containing her name with the very unusual title, "Doctress." Such medical knowledge as she possessed was

not claimed to be the result of any special study but rather the evidence of some extraordinary intuition. There were plenty of similar instances in the days before the practice of medicine was legally restricted. It soon became apparent that the widow's patients were chiefly resident boarders, generally one or two lonely old widowers. In a vague sense, therefore, it may be seen that the widow had forecast in her mind the general idea of the sanitarium, then practically unknown. The hum of gossip reached a high crescendo and the sanitarium project was soon abandoned—not however, because of the gossip but for lack of sufficient clinical material to pay expenses. Thereupon the people of the township began to wonder what would happen next. They didn't have long to wait.

Although the possessor of extraordinary gifts in the healing art, the widow had other talents which were not kept in obscurity. She "dickered" in real estate in a necessarily small way and was a horse trader of recognized ability. But her ambition at this time was in the medical field and having removed

to commodious quarters she announced her great discovery, "The Mountain Envigorator."

Although this panacea was widely heralded as calculated to relieve most of the physical ills of mankind, and although Emerson, the Sage, has pictured in graphic language the great procession of people who would eagerly penetrate the trackless wilderness to do business with the inventor of a better mouse trap than the one probably in use at the Philosopher's Concord residence, there was singular apathy manifest regarding the Envigorator. Sales were very, very slow and expenses large.

However, the widow was resourceful. She fitted out a two-horse pedlar's cart and engaged an assistant to travel about with her and help introduce her remedy.

Thereupon for a season the money began to flow back to the widow's purse. But such prosperity was too obvious to the assistant who soon began to clamor for an exorbitant salary. It was a crisis and must be met and was met.

At this time the widow's personal charms had become somewhat mellowed with age, but she decided to exercise them. The young man with a fortune in sight soon succumbed and they were married.

It will probably occasion no surprise to relate that the husband's financial demands soon exceeded his most preposterous claims as an employee. Dissensions arose, the business languished and the bridegroom departed. The widow also went away, never to return, but before leaving she accomplished a master stroke which aroused the admiration of the most censorious women of the countryside.

In a nearby village there was a woman who had succeeded in making herself feared for her vindictive type of gossip. She had long specialized on the widow's affairs. Not content with revealing what she knew, she finally surpassed herself with a story which could easily be shown to be false. The victim saw her opportunity and the romancer was given her choice of an immediate retraction or jail. A day or two later the widow and the gossiping dame made the rounds of

the village and adjacent farms. At each call the hostess was informed by the widow that her companion had an explanation to make. Whereupon the woman of the poison tongue would proceed to relate that in telling the story in question, she had drawn wholly upon her imagination. Before the housewife could recover from her astonishment at such an unprecedented narrative, the widow and her victim would have departed to convey the glad tidings elsewhere.

While there are few who can surpass the typical New England Yankee as a natural shrewd trader, there are numerous residents of that section of Canadian-French, Irish or Italian ancestry, who are amply qualified to hold their own. A conspicuous example of this type of shrewdness is recorded in which an Irishman, widely known as "Tim," took the leading part.

The Expedient of the Cow Buyer

"Tim" had a large farm and always had cows to sell to buyers, provided he could get

his price, which was usually a stiff one. To replace animals thus disposed of, he would travel around the surrounding country, securing a cow here and there, as they could be picked up at his price. A fortunate sale left him very short of dairy cows, and hearing of a farmer living some distance away, who had some to sell, he lost no time in appearing on the scene.

The farmer in question had twenty good looking animals, but even Tim, with all his experience and judgment, could not for the life of him make up his mind which were the most desirable for his purpose. As he saw the farmer did not know who he was, he assumed the guise of the confiding novice. He asked the farmer to put a price on ten cows, as he might select from the herd. After some hesitation the seller named a figure which was a very fair price for good cows but a high price for most any other kind. Every herd has its star performers and just how to get the best from the herd was a problem. After much discussion and innocent talk on his part, Tim finally asked the

farmer to recommend the cows that would be likely to be satisfactory to him, if he was to accept his offer. This idea seemed to be attractive to the seller, and he proceeded to point out a cow here and there in the herd until he had finally named the ten to make up the order. Tim's decision was immediate.

"All right," said he, "I'll take the other ten."

This was an unexpected turn of affairs to the seller, but he was a man of his word and Tim drove his ten best cows away with that deep sense of satisfaction which the skillful trader always experiences when things have come his way.

It may be assumed therefore that the modern form of sentimentalism, of which we hear so much in certain circles, whereby the energetic and thrifty are held in disapproval because they do not show a tender solicitude for the indolent and incapable, is not widely prevalent in rural New England. Every real Yankee who gets the losing end of a trade, under fair circumstances, accepts the results

of his own incapacity and resolves to be more cautious in the future. As an example of this give and take state of public opinion may be mentioned the case of the man who had contracted with a mechanic for a new milk sled.

The History of a Milk Sled

The mechanic was well qualified. It could be taken for granted that a finished article from his hands would be satisfactory. The only difficulty was in getting him to complete the job. Being occupied with various details he was inclined to procrastinate. In this instance he made an excellent start, had the sled well near completion, and then for some unaccountable reason could not seem to get the time to finish it. The customer would inquire every day or two as to the prospects. There was an abundance of promises but very little action. Several weeks went by. The situation became very exasperating.

The builder of sleds had an excellent article of his own employed in his collateral enterprises. One day the customer whose old sled

was now in the last stages of dilapidation, saw the mechanic on his way to town and came to an instant decision. He drove to the latter's home, changed his horses to the mechanic's sled and proceeded about his business. When he saw the owner he told him he could have his property back when he had finished the job promised weeks before. The mechanic grinned appreciatively, and in a very short time the contract was completed.

CHAPTER VI

DOMESTIC ANIMALS AND THEIR PART IN LEGENDARY HUMOR

ONE of the strongest potential arguments in favor of the so-called "back to the farm" movement, is seldom appreciated by city dwellers, *viz.*, the opportunity thus afforded for companionship with the domestic animals.

To the average person there are horses, cattle, dogs and cats; but those, especially farm people, who are in intimate daily contact with these animals, realize that every horse, cow, dog and cat has a separate individuality. Children brought up in such associations soon recognize all these distinctive traits and thereby acquire a much more broad understanding of the general manifestations of nature than is possible to the children brought up to look upon such animals with contempt, if not with dread.

People of average attainments in business, or socially, seldom appreciate how much contact with domestic animals has to do with

the development of practical common sense and self-reliance among those who have been fortunate enough to spend their early days in an agricultural environment.

On every farm of any importance, the daily routine must to a certain degree take into account the varying individual traits and capacities of the farm animals. The boy who has grown up in these surroundings and who has been taught to restrain his impatience, to exercise forbearance and to help induce the sense of felicity and general comfort among the domestic animals on a farm, which is essential to their well-being, has incidentally laid the foundations for the development of that good judgment which usually determines the difference between success and failure.

The Story of a Wandering Sheep

The sheep is generally regarded as a very uninteresting animal, but occasionally there is an exception.

A man who had a small farm, stocked mostly with cattle, had a few sheep which

he kept in a small pasture by themselves. Among this flock was a young masculine who had gradually acquired the opinion that he was an unusually brilliant and promising sheep. In order to exhibit the good opinion he had of himself he developed a pugnacious tendency and a disposition to wander about. Escaping from the pasture, he was reported one day as being a trespasser on the farm of a near neighbor.

The following evening the owner of the young sheep proceeded to the neighbor's farm to reclaim the wanderer and put him back where he belonged. It had been a showery day and everything was saturated with rain. Approaching the farmyard where the strayed sheep was reported to be, the owner saw the wife of the farmer engaged in milking a cow. Incidentally, he saw the sheep on the other side of the cow from the matron. And almost immediately he saw other developments. The sheep had been regarded with strong disfavor by the strange cows with which he was surrounded and with a spirit of resentment he suddenly

started head down at the cow being milked. Although the lady who was busily engaged in the milking process was totally unconscious of what was happening, it was not so with the cow. Just at the psychological moment, the cow sprang forward and the sheep came in violent contact with the lady and the milk pail. The impact was so great that the woman was thrown over backward in the soft mud of the barnyard, the contents of the pail being liberally distributed about her robust person.

Although the physical injury was not serious, the damage to the lady's dignity was such that the owner of the sheep decided that it was a very inappropriate time to claim his missing property and hastily beat his retreat to make his reappearance when the lady's wrath had somewhat subsided.

While the lady sheep is a model of amiability under practically all circumstances, as before suggested, the male of the species develops egotism at a very early date; he also develops a tendency to resent anything and

everything that reflects upon his dignity. So, while it is entirely appropriate to emphasize the educational advantages of farm life to growing boys and girls as calculated to develop many desirable qualities, it is easily possible for such contact to result disastrously to the young male sheep as evidenced by the following depressing incident.

The Young and “Self-Centered” Ram

Another young and somewhat self-centered male sheep had been tantalized by small boys until his dignity was deeply wounded. He was one of two or three that followed a herd of cows around a large pasture on a dairy farm. In a certain portion of this enclosure there were some wild raspberry bushes, and a certain estimable scrub woman of the neighborhood went to the pasture one day to pick some berries. There was something about this woman that didn't meet with the approval of the young sheep and he made a sudden attack which resulted in the loss of the berries and incidentally pro-

duced a few bruises. The woman escaped from the pasture and went to the farmhouse and expressed her indignation that any such wild beast should be allowed to be at large to commit assaults on the neighbors. The owner of the sheep, a very amiable man, apologized profusely and directed that the animal be kept in confinement, at least until the berry season was over. He was therefore confined in a ramshackle stable, tied behind a loose board.

Enter the villains of this tragedy! four small boys, each armed with a small, harmless, but otherwise objectionable birch stick. The prisoner glared at them, whereupon one after another they advanced and tapped the young ram playfully on the nose with their sticks. In violent resentment he would lunge forward against the loose board, making a tremendous racket. Although this enterprise only lasted a few minutes before it became tiresome to the gamins in question, it was sufficient to completely wreck whatever might have been previously left of this sheep's amiability. He became an anarchist then and there.

The next morning was rainy and there was no probability that any berry pickers would visit the pasture, so the sheep which had expressed his dissatisfaction by many loud protests during the previous days, was gladly released to be allowed to go at large. It was here that Grim Tragedy stalked forth. The farmyard was a quagmire as a result of the rain and as one of the older "boys" started to carefully pick his way through the mud with two brimming milk pails, the sheep caught sight of him and decided that this was the time to avenge some of those insults of the day before. Just as the young man was crossing the deepest portion of the bog, he was made the victim of a rear attack. The result can easily be imagined. In his great wrath, extricating himself, he cornered the pugnacious sheep and changed him into mutton in a very few seconds.

It has been stated before that contact with the various animal inhabitants of a well equipped farm is in itself an educational process of no small value; it may be added

that there is often as much diversion as education in these experiences.

The Sudden Enlightenment of the Young Pup

Much has been written of geese and their superior mental qualities as compared with other fowl. It is true that they are wise in certain ways and that the average hen is very stupid by comparison. But the hen is a never-ending source of amusement to many people, especially when zealously engaged in bringing up a brood. It might be almost assumed that the hen has reasoning power at times, as for example:

A collie puppy was added to the equipment of a certain farm and after a few days he began to make a general tour of investigation. He seemed to find the young chickens about as interesting as anything and while doing them no injury he would nose them about to the terror of the chickens and the great indignation of the mother hens. At a time of emergency some noble figure should always step forward and this emer-

gency was no exception. Early one morning the pup was seen flying across the yard, uttering the most agonizing cries, one of the maternal hens standing squarely in the middle of his back, incidentally giving him her opinion of dogs in general and himself in particular. The hen hopped off and went back to the chickens and the puppy was absolutely cured. He had no further curiosity in that direction.

A Hen Heroine

Another true instance of hen wisdom deals with an ancient female of that species, who had lived to ripe old age because of her extraordinarily good judgment in bringing up chickens. One day the owner heard a great outcry. Looking out she saw the hen engaged in a vigorous battle with a crow. It may be incidentally mentioned that while the crow does not ordinarily molest young chickens, there are exceptions and this was a very bold marauder indeed. However, he reckoned without his host, as the old hen had lived long enough and had acquired

sufficient knowledge of crow depravity to meet the emergency in a business-like way. She viciously attacked and continued to fight the crow, who was unable to get in a position to fly away, until help arrived and the crow was promptly dispatched. No young fowl, a year or two old, would have had the requisite courage, but this hen, who had long since passed the stage of edibility as poultry, had gradually developed the intelligence and pluck to fight the crow with his own weapons.

It is often pathetic to see how difficult it is for a normal small boy who lives in the crowded sections of a big city to find any legitimate outlet for his energies. He grows up with relatively few opportunities to develop any sense of personal responsibility. Not so the boy on the New England farm. If it is a real farm and conducted as a means of livelihood for the family, responsibility is constantly camping on his trail.

The Story of the "Lolling" Horse

Two farm boys about ten years of age who lived in a period when there were no automobiles, had early been accustomed to the care of farm animals and had incidentally had some casual experiences in driving horses.

One day they were given permission to visit a married cousin of one of the boys at her home some miles away. For the first time in their young lives they were allowed to start out alone with a horse and buggy. It was a great occasion and they began their journey with much anticipation, but before they had gone a mile Dull Care had settled upon them and attended them continuously until their return in the early evening.

Only a short time before, one of the boys heard a distressing story relating to an ox that had died from being overheated. A premonitory symptom of the approaching demise of the ox had been that he "lolled." This had made a deep impression on the boy who heard the story.

It would hardly seem to be necessary to explain that of all domestic animals, the horse is the only one which perspires freely. This affords relief to the horse when hard at work on a warm day. And it of course provides a clue to his condition. The teamster will not push his overheated team horses too hard. With the ox team it is different. Heat exhaustion may be near and still there will be little or no evidence of such condition, the most characteristic symptom, however, being the tendency of the ox to "loll" or allow his tongue to protrude from his mouth in his panting efforts to perform his task.

Therefore with this bovine tragedy fresh in mind it is easy to imagine the consternation of these two holiday seekers, when, after jogging along at a comfortable pace for a mile or two, the horse, beginning to show some evidence of perspiration, and turning his head to snap at a pestiferous fly, disclosed the fact that his tongue was protruding. The boys looked at each other with horror. What had they done? The none too reluctant animal was restrained to a

slow walk and after a time the boys saw with great relief that he had his tongue back in his mouth where a horse's tongue ought to be. They slowly made their way to the home of their hostess and, not wishing to disclose the fact that they had been over-driving their horse, they carefully refrained from speaking of the heavy weight of anxiety with which they were oppressed. They made an early start for home and after a slow, tedious journey in the hottest part of the day, they arrived and turned over their horse apparently as sound as when they had taken him in charge. Their mysterious manner, however, caused interest and when the facts were made clear, it afforded much amusement to the two families who could not refrain from making subsequent allusions to "the lolling horse." It may be said in explanation that the horse in question merely had a little habit of occasionally protruding his tongue, which the boys had never happened to notice before. It may be taken for granted, however, that the sense of responsibility thus displayed by the boys, was not lost sight of by their elders.

And it may also be assumed that the next time that horse was driven by those boys, he was not permitted to lag on his journey.

The common exchange of farm implements, wagons, or sleds, in rural New England, does not generally include the loaning of team horses. The average farm horse, as before suggested, has his special individuality, and it is not a difficult thing for a work horse to get demoralized in the hands of a strange driver. In such cases, he may become very reluctant to take hold and pull a heavy load.

The Farmer Who Borrowed the Blind Horse

A certain farmer, however, had a horse which he was always ready to turn over to any responsible borrower. The horse was blind and his age had long been a matter of conjecture. One day a neighbor, unaware of the extraordinary docility of this poor, blind beast, asked if he could have the horse to drive eight or ten miles on a necessary errand. Permission was readily granted and he led

the horse home, harnessed him, and started out. He succeeded in getting back home in the middle of the night. The next morning he led the horse back to the owner.

"It is my custom," said he, "to pay for a borrowed horse in praising, but this time I want to pay some other way."

Just how much blindness had to do with the total lack of courage of this borrowed horse would be hard to say, but it was probably a contributing factor.

It is sometimes hinted that people who have retained health and comparative youthfulness to an advanced age, have reason to thank themselves for the excellent judgment they have manifested in avoiding undue exertion rather than for any unusual inherited vigor. There are, however, other factors besides the avoidance of physical labor to be considered, as for example, cheerful temperament and an active, alert mind. This latter quality seems to hold good with the animal creation as shown by the following example.

The Lame Horse That Was Suddenly Cured

A young couple, who had arrived at a state of mind in which there was considerable mutual interest, found it very desirable one day to take a little drive. Their parents lived on two adjoining farms and it was a busy season. Spare horses were scarce. Finally an agreement was reached. The young lady agreed to furnish horse and harness if her companion would furnish the buggy. This seemed to be a practical arrangement and they started gayly out on their trip. After lunch in town, there seemed to be nothing else to do but start for home, but they were in no great hurry to arrive there, so at a certain turn in the road they decided to make a detour.

The little Morgan mare of quite advanced age, contributed by the young lady as her quota of the team, had very peculiar ideas. She thoroughly disapproved of the trip in the first place, and secondly the young man's driving was also entirely different from anything she was accustomed to. At the prospect of

returning home, however, she seemed to cheer up amazingly until she found herself being turned off on the side road. She moped along for a few yards and then began to be very lame.

"This is a nice prospect!" said the driver. "I think we had better turn straight around and get home, if we can."

The young lady was quite well acquainted with the little white mare.

"Let me take those reins," said she.

She took over the reins and gave the poor, lame horse a couple of slashes with the whip and a miracle was performed. The lameness was cured in an instant.

One of the most frequent tragedies of agricultural life is where some farmer allows himself to feel that he has somehow lost a considerable part of the pleasures of life by living remote from town. In such a case the farmer, if well to do, may dispose of his farm and move to a nearby village. And then, far too often, physical and even mental degeneration will soon be in evidence. Lack of occupation is no doubt a considerable fac-

tor, but the loss of the interest and congenial companionship associated with domestic animals is probably no small item in this disintegration.

In the consideration of animal life and its influence upon farm environment, the wild birds should not be overlooked. As with the human race, these birds present the varying characteristics of those who are helpful and popular and those who constitute a problem.

The Bird Policeman

The crow is both a pest and a useful citizen. He is not nearly as popular with the average farmer as he ought to be. It is the old story of the roughneck's total contempt for the opinion of his neighbors, human or otherwise. The crow's attitude is in general stated as follows: "You can't put anything over on me." He is an ardent believer in "collective bargaining" and when it is desirable to raid a field of ripe corn, the entire crow colony is carefully organized for the

purpose. Pickets will be established to warn of the approach of any man with a gun.

But, however sardonic may be the attitude of Mr. Crow toward the poor, plodding human farmers, he is quick to recognize his master, the kingbird.

In a certain farmyard the crows and hawks had established a reign of terror among the hens and chickens. Broods of chickens would be depleted one by one until there were few survivors and the women of the household became thoroughly exasperated. This went on to a greater or less extent for several years. One bright June morning a certain Mr. and Mrs. Kingbird arrived from a more southern clime and looked the premises over. They decided that there was an excellent opportunity to establish a home in one of the shade trees. They had hardly got at work, however, before the male bird found it necessary to take up a certain line of police duties. He discovered that the crows and hawks had been making themselves very much at home in that immediate neighborhood.

Within twenty-four hours the word had gone around to all the marauders, and for

years thereafter they never came near those premises again. Each season the kingbird and his wife would come back. That was sufficient protection for the young chickens who could scratch about within the limits of their enclosure with perfect safety. It can be taken for granted that everything was done by the owners of the farm to make it pleasant for the bird policeman, who by his extraordinary activities and fearlessness strikes terror to the heart of the swiftest hawk, lest he be blinded by one of the lightning dashes of the kingbird who always aims for the eyes.

The Evicted Swallows

At the same farm some swallows had established a system of commodious mud dwellings under the eaves of the south and east side of the barn. They occupied these premises year after year with apparent satisfaction. One spring they were abruptly and summarily dispossessed, although allowed to re-establish themselves on the other side of the building. This is but a mere detail in bird life. The warm southeastern exposure looked good to some

bluebirds and they promptly evicted those who had apparently secured the right of possession by a long lease.

The Proprietary Attitude of the Robins

Robins, to most people, are merely robins. It would surprise the average city inhabitant however, perhaps, to know that even the robin may be individualized by farm dwellers, so that a certain old cock robin who has been coming back, presumably with the same wife, year after year, is promptly recognized on his arrival. In advanced years the cock robin sometimes seems to develop obesity or at least great abdominal extension, which may quite naturally be due to gradual indisposition to labor but with no compensating tendency to reduce rations. This is, however, so frequently observed in other male bipeds that it should not occasion surprise.

The robin is perhaps the most popular of birds in the rural districts. It is an unwritten law among native New Englanders that they shall not be harassed or molested. The house

cat which has been detected catching a robin is in great disfavor immediately.

About the first sure indication of actual spring in this section is the appearance of these welcome birds whose cheerfulness seems to be contagious. They seem to be socially inclined toward humans and are quite apt to locate their nests in close proximity to some farmhouse. Indeed at times they seem to assume a rather proprietary attitude toward the farm owners themselves, as shown by the following typical incident.

One sultry day in July, it was noted at a certain farmhouse, that there seemed to be considerable excitement among the robins. They were unusually vociferous and someone wise to their habits suggested that probably the young birds were about ready to make their first trial flights. On the Sunday morning in question, most of the family had gone to church when a certain slacker, who was left behind, took his comfortable seat on the porch facing the lawn. The house dog was lying on the grass nearby and all was quiet among the robins with one exception. The exception was expressing high

disapproval of something. Suddenly there was the chatter of a squirrel in a clump of trees a short distance away, and the dog arose to his feet and started leisurely down to investigate. When he had gone about fifty feet there suddenly developed a perfect din of protest, several robins joining in the chorus to explain to the dog how unwelcome he was and no doubt including various other uncomplimentary comments.

It was plainly depressing to the dog; he had had no quarrel with the robins and saw no reason why they should talk to him in such abusive terms. He came dejectedly back to his original location and lay down. The chorus of disfavor stopped. Meantime, however, the robin in the tree directly in front of the porch continued his tirade. Finally the dog again arose and went around the corner, the man on the porch decided to go in the house, and immediately all clamour ceased.

The Haunted Cat

At another farmhouse there were two well fed and properly cared for cats actively en-

gaged in the ever necessary warfare against mice. A colony of swallows had built their nests under the eaves of a large barn. So far as the human inhabitants of the farm could know there was no essential difference in the moral characters of the two cats. But while one of these cats could circulate around the buildings and no swallow would seem to take any interest in the matter, as soon as the other cat made her appearance in the space between the house and barn, various active members of the swallow colony would immediately issue forth from their retreat and proceed to swoop around and around the cat a few feet from the ground, to her great discomfiture and embarrassment. It became practically impossible for the cat to go out of doors without undergoing this ordeal. She became a nervous wreck and finally had to avoid this open area and take her promenades in another direction.

It would be interesting to know just why the swallows made such a discrimination between the two cats. Possibly the object of their resentment had some time succeeded in

capturing one of the birds, but such an achievement by a cat is not very common, as the swallows are extremely agile and capable of keeping out of reach. And if one cat had become unpopular for this cause, why should not the swallows have adopted aggressive and protective tactics toward the other cat who might naturally be expected to follow the same predatory instinct if given the opportunity?

To people who have spent their entire lifetime in the city, these incidents of animal life might easily seem to be mostly imaginary, but to those who are of receptive mind and keep a watchful eye upon the various activities of the animal creation as revealed to them by residence in the open country, there is presented a panorama of individual traits, numerous and delightfully varied.

CHAPTER VII

LEGENDS OF RURAL SPOOKS

IT must be regretfully stated that the old time folklore of the supposed supernatural has apparently vanished from modern New England. Skepticism has seized upon the present generation and such genuine unalloyed ghost stories as still persist are regarded as the harmless delusions of old age. Thus, much that furnished thrills in earlier days has departed.

They were creepy enough, those ancient tales. And in most instances they were vouched for as strictly true by people whose reputations for veracity were beyond dispute.

The Ghost in the Milk Dairy

Take the story of the milk pans as an example. The people who occupied the milk pan infested residence were an intelligent church going family of the highest standing. They were not superstitious and in fact regarded

their spooky experiences as a joke. They had a dairy farm at a period when cream separators were unknown.

The process at that time was to "set" the milk in shallow tin pans and skim off the cream when the milk had become sour. The cream was then made into butter. Where there were quite a number of cows, a considerable stack of these tin pans was required. Such as were not in use would be placed in an orderly pile on a high shelf in the milk room.

Therefore, it can be readily understood that if one of these pans was to slide off the shelf to the floor, it would make a loud noise.

Now, suppose the farmer and his family were sitting around the evening lamp and all at once an unearthly din in the milk room should indicate that a dozen or perhaps two dozen of those six-quart milk pans had rolled from the top shelf to the floor, we would naturally expect one or more members of the family to go at once to investigate.

Well, this highly respectable and truthful family would do nothing of the kind. They

would remain quietly reading the weekly paper, or knitting, or popping corn, according to age and disposition; because they knew no milk pans had stirred an inch. It was merely the spook amusing himself.

The Spook Story of the Runaway Horse

A family lived on a back hilly road, and where the highway passed their house it was quite steep. Comparatively few teams would be seen during the day and still fewer would be abroad at night. It therefore might be expected that when all the sounds of a horse galloping wildly down the road with a rattling wagon at his heels should be heard, the people would rush to the windows and doors to find out whose horse was subjecting his driver to probable injury or sudden death; but they didn't—at least after the first few times. They knew no horse was running away; it was only the spook.

And still there are people in this age of jazz who think the "old times" had no excitement.

Most of the practical jokes of the spook were harmless, but in a given instance he seems to have gone rather too far.

Table Tipping and a Victim

As could be expected a certain number of people were disposed to take these "manifestations" quite seriously, regardless of the ridicule of their neighbors. A group of these seekers after occult knowledge had gathered one evening to engage in their favorite avocation of "table tipping," and were unusually favored with "signs." The small table around which they were seated became so totally unmindful of the force of gravity that a recent novitiate of corpulent figure was induced to seat himself upon it to keep it in place. No sooner had he taken his position than the table began to float about the room.

It was a triumphant moment for the believers. They were succeeding beyond their wildest anticipations. The table, after various oscillations, approached the stairway, still carrying the portly investigator. Clinging to it were a number of enthusiasts who stumbled

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up the stairway well toward the top. Suddenly the invisible force weakened, and the table with its burden, fell with a crash.

The victim was considerably bruised but otherwise physically uninjured. His vanity had however received a hard jolt and he took no further part in the séances.

There is significance in the fact that although most people of the rural districts long ago lost interest in "spirit" phenomena, it has lately engaged the attention of city dwellers to an increasing extent. Such investigations passed under the ban of country people because of the current impression that they were generally demoralizing in their influence. Those who maintained the churches were skeptical and this developed antagonisms, which affected attendance upon church and Sunday school. The "ouija board" is about all there is left of the old time manifestations in rural New England.

The Story of the Ouija Board

But even the ouija board can carry consternation to the wayward.

A New England youth of unusually good looks became impressed with the idea that his face could easily be made to be his fortune. The matrimonial route seemed to be easiest and after a short courtship he became the husband of a woman of considerable wealth. To be sure she was quite deaf and some forty years his senior, but there could be many collateral diversions. His elation was short lived. The old lady had not lived so many years without acquiring wisdom. She promptly added to her other bridal accessories a "ouija" with which she soon became proficient.

Before his marriage the young husband had made the acquaintance of numerous fair ones of whom chorus girls seemed the most congenial. But he soon found it wise to avoid their company. With her faithful ouija, his wife could have him shadowed at all hours of the day. It was too uncanny. He became the most docile and punctilious of husbands.

Coincidence often assumes an uncanny resemblance to the so-called supernatural. Instances in which a certain type of dream was followed by disaster are common to all classes of people. But what is to be said of "signs" during waking hours? as for example the following legend of a highly intelligent married couple who would have scorned to palm off such a narrative unless authentic.

The Unreal Arrival of Uncle Mark

Late one summer evening these middle-aged parents of a considerable family had just retired to rest, the younger people being long since abed and asleep. All at once the silence of the farm was broken by the sound of a horse and buggy coming rapidly up the main road, and which turned from the highway, passed through the yard and up a driveway into the horse barn. The farmer and his wife exchanged glances, one of them remarking that "Uncle Mark," a brother of the farmer, was evidently making one of his customary unannounced visits.

Then followed the familiar sounds of the horse being detached from the buggy and led into the stall. The farmer hastily readjusting his clothing, took the lamp and went down stairs to admit the visitor. Seeing and hearing no one he went down the porch and crossed the yard to the barn. He found no strange horse, wagon or driver.

When the wife was told that what they had both heard so distinctly was a delusion, she looked very grave.

“That means bad news,” was all she said.

The farmer and his wife went to bed and let us hope they slept the sleep of the just. The next morning a telegram announced the sudden death of a near relative. It would be hard to convince any of their descendants that this fine old couple had betrayed any weak superstitious delusions in describing this mysterious combination of happenings.

It is probable that the experienced traveling salesman is about as near immune to superstitious thrills as any type of citizen, but in one specific case even his iron nerve gave way.

The Locked Door Which Swung Open

A young man of exceptional vigor and equipoise, traveling through a hilly country, had occasion to make a late journey across a mountain. The road was poor and the traveling tedious and he found that he had sadly miscalculated the time required to complete the trip. He decided to stop at the first likely looking farmhouse and beg for a chance to stay over night.

By this time it was very dark but he was able to get a glimpse of two or three cabins on the way that seemed too utterly unattractive for consideration. Finally he came to a more commodious looking establishment and decided to go no further if he could possibly avoid it. Stopping his horse in front of the house he hallooed several times. There was no answer, so inferring the inhabitants were sound sleepers, the young man concluded to first find shelter for his horse and then come back and in some way or other secure a night's lodging for himself.

An outbuilding was located and unharnessing his horse, he tied him to a beam and

after giving the animal some hay and a bedding of the same, he went back to the farmhouse, intending to pound on the door until he aroused the inmates. But he did not pound on the door.

As the weary traveler approached the front step, the door began to turn, swung around slowly and finally stood wide open. There was not the slightest noise nor sign of any human agency associated with the door. Every individual hair arose on the young man's head. He thought with joy and relief of that good, faithful animal munching his dry hay. He hastened back to the shed, lay down as near the horse as safety would permit, and so managed to pass the night.

At daybreak he resumed his journey, but before leaving he observed positive evidences that the house was uninhabited. The door was locked!

It is probable that had the salesman had the time and disposition to make a careful daylight inspection of the vacant house, he might have discovered some perfectly natural cause for the mysterious actions of the front

door. But his curiosity, was not very active just then.

In another instance the investigations of a traveling salesman nearly caused a case of sudden death by heart failure.

The Joke Played on the Hotel Porter

This young man found himself marooned for the Sabbath at a little hotel in a back country town. Sunday afternoon, finding nothing better to do, he proceeded to put the blasé hotel clerk through a third degree examination in regard to any local points of interest which might alleviate the general tiresomeness of the situation. The only interesting feature apparently possessed by the town was a haunted house guaranteed to be genuine in every respect.

There was the usual legend of some ghastly tragedy and the record of spookish antics frequently associated with such histories. Altogether the salesman was disposed to consider this a real find and worth looking after.

The most conspicuous member of the hotel staff of employees was a colored porter. Bland and attentive, this young man took his position very seriously indeed. The salesman became very chummy with the porter. He found several occasions to utilize his services and showed his appreciation by liberal tips. It therefore seemed only natural to the porter that the salesman should propose that he have his company for an evening's stroll to look over the town, especially as the suggestion was associated with the promise of an extra half dollar.

In his conversation with the clerk, the salesman had learned the general location of the haunted house, and waiting until it was quite dark he started out in that direction with his escort. He remarked on the darkness of the night, saying it was just the kind of a night for ghosts to be on duty. Finally he asked his companion if he knew of any haunted houses in town. The porter rather reluctantly admitted that he did know of one and that they were getting pretty near to it.

By this time the porter had evidently lost interest in the excursion and suggested that

he would be needed at the hotel. He was, however, prevailed upon to go a little further. Shortly afterward there loomed up a large old-fashioned dwelling surrounded by considerable grounds which he pronounced to be the haunted house. It was uninhabited of course.

The porter again urged that he would be needed at the hotel, but the salesman insisted that he must get a little nearer before going back. When about opposite the house, he stopped and took a careful look at the building which now looked dismal enough in the dim starlight.

The salesman was possessed of a voice that he could make unusually penetrating. He suddenly gave a tremendous leap backward and yelled in a most agonizing tone.

“Great Heavens! What is that?”

But his companion did not answer. He disappeared down the road at a pace that no professional sprinter could excel.

In “the good old days” a ghost seems to have generally appeared to investigate any unusually spectacular murder. This came about

according to custom following the celebrated pedlar mystery.

The Pedlar Who Disappeared

A German Jew had built up a profitable trade among the farmers in a certain section and was looked for every summer by his customers. He traveled with a horse and cart and carried a considerable stock of silks for dresses and heavy black broadcloth for men's suits. Another item of considerable importance in his business was a choice stock of Paisley shawls.

The prosperous farmer of that period was expected to provide his wife with at least one black silk dress in addition to the one she may have had as a part of her wedding outfit, the shawl adding the final touch of elegance to her wardrobe.

Naturally the wife would expect her husband to be dressed according to her standard, and that meant at least one new broadcloth suit every ten or fifteen years. Therefore the pedlar could always count upon a consider-

able number of sales and it can be taken for granted that he made at least a fair profit.

It was, however, often necessary for him to extend credit as actual money was very scarce in those times. But he knew his customers and rather encouraged this class of business.

One season the pedlar made his usual rounds, did a considerable credit business, delivering his goods as usual and—was never seen again.

The farmers who had provided themselves with funds to settle their accounts could not understand the case. The pedlar was apparently the last man of their acquaintance to neglect his collections. Time passed, the year rolled around and nothing was heard. It was indeed a mystery.

One day a marvelous story went the rounds. A well-known young man announced that he could keep his secret no longer. He had a confession to make.

He said that about the time of the pedlar's last visit, returning home one evening, he had overtaken two men on a lonely road through

the woods who were carrying a heavy burden wrapped in a blanket. Finding they were discovered the men had required him, on penalty of death, to help them bury a man's body. It was the pedlar.

Pressed for details as to the identity of the probable murderers, he named two well-known business men of a nearby town who presumably, tempted by the large sums of money habitually carried by the pedlar, had committed the crime.

The accused were naturally placed under arrest, but their denials of the crime were not vehement as might have been expected, but were calmly contemptuous. They arranged their affairs as best they could and settled down to endure confinement in the county jail as patiently as possible until the next session of court. There does not seem to have been any evidence to corroborate the testimony of the principal witness, and when he later appeared before the county prosecutor and told him the alleged confession was merely a romance suggested to his mind through a badly distorted sense of humor, there was

nothing further to be done with the alleged murderers except to release them.

While in these latter days such a hoax on the authorities would likely prove unpleasant to the joker, he apparently escaped any legal penalty. But he found it expedient to shortly leave the neighborhood, as the theory was promptly advanced that the original confession was really justified, but that the witness had in some manner been induced by the accused parties to retract, probably by a liberal bribe. His later prosperity in a large New England city was generally attributed to this source by censorious former neighbors, although others, probably better informed, were aware that he was a highly paid and valued employee in a large mercantile establishment.

This would seem to be the logical end of this narrative, but although the subsequent history of the case can be rather briefly told, what has been heretofore stated is but the beginning of the story.

Those who had been accused of the crime did not follow the example of the unreliable witness, but remained to spend the balance

of their days attending to their usual occupations in the town where they had lived so long. One of these men was considerably older than the other, and although there had been no special intimacy apparent between the two from year to year, when the older man eventually developed what promised to be a fatal illness, the other promptly gave over his business to a subordinate and took up his abode at the home of the sick man. Day after day, and in fact night after night, he was always at the invalid's call and it was generally and plausibly reported that no one was left alone with the sick man from that time until his death. Naturally those who enjoyed the sensational, immediately assumed that the attendant was afraid to permit his former alleged associate in crime any opportunity for private conversation with others lest he unburden his mind by a confession.

Enter the ghost!

During the last years of the man so carefully watched by his partner, he lived in a large old-fashioned house on a back street,

surrounded by ample grounds. The household consisted solely of himself and an elderly woman acting as a domestic. The man was to a considerable extent a recluse, but whenever he had occasion to leave his home after nightfall, which was seldom, his housekeeper would immediately make haste to visit a friend. She declared that nothing would induce her to stay in alone at night, because of numerous uncanny noises and especially certain dismal groans proceeding from some never fully revealed part of the house. Coincidentally with the death of the owner these spookish manifestations ceased. Many long years have passed since that time and the house is still standing in good preservation. It has been occupied by different families during this time and only the oldest inhabitants remember that at one time it was regarded as harboring a ghost.

All the actors in this tragedy or comedy have long since passed away, but the legend persists as one of the most unique old-time mysteries of New England.

The skeptical reader might easily dismiss the foregoing history as being in all probability the result of too much imagination and rural credulity, but those who vouch for another story of "hants" are still living and their testimony is absolutely beyond question.

The Sudden Discontinuance of the "Spirit Raps"

A young couple with an infant child occupied a typical New England house located on a thriving farm. The house was in a good state of preservation and the residents were healthy and normal in every respect. Their sleeping room, however, became widely noted among their acquaintances. It was fairly infested with "spirit raps."

The exhibit was usually about as follows: Soon after retiring and while perhaps getting into the drowsy stage that borders upon dreamland, a series of raps would suddenly start on the ceiling and pass diagonally across the room. After moving from the farthest corner the raps would gradually seem to come down the wall at the head of

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the bed, at which point raps would be heard on the wooden headboard and upon the pillows. This occurred on numerous occasions and became quite a nuisance.

One evening the young couple went to bed unusually fatigued from a hard day's exertions. Just as they settled down to sleep, the raps started in louder than usual. Exasperated by these unwelcome noises, the husband suddenly expressed his mind. He told his wife that he wished those certain kind of spirits would go back to Hades where they came from and let him sleep.

It was not surprising that he should have lost patience, but it was surprising that the raps did then and there cease, never again to be heard.

Another old-time story of the mysterious was told by a young woman whose Puritanic regard for strict veracity was almost a joke to her friends.

The Supernatural Illumination

With her young child in the cradle, she was sitting in the early evening in a room which looked out upon an open space of ground including the driveway. Save for the child, she was absolutely alone in the house. It was a very thick, starless night, threatening rain. At her back as she sat in the darkness, resting from her labors and thinking that she must get a light and do some sewing, there was a window almost entirely hidden by vines which were allowed to shade that part of the room, there being other windows to furnish light.

Suddenly there flashed on the wall before her a bright reflection of the vine-covered window, the frame standing out clear and distinct as though there were no vines at all. She looked at this reflection with great astonishment a moment, sprang to her feet, opened the door and started out on the porch which commanded a complete view of the entire front of the house and the open field beyond. There was not a sound nor a

sign of anybody abroad. It is asked in the Scriptures if a woman can forget her sucking child, but in this instance she could, for she ran down the road like a wild thing to a nearby house, where she secured the companionship and moral support of a kindly old woman, and returned for the protection of her sleeping infant.

To the present generation these tales of the supernatural would be generally regarded as rubbish. Those who lived in years of maturity a half century ago would hardly be inclined to so classify them. On the contrary, they would regard them as unsolved mysteries existing at the time, often amusing and seldom terrifying. Let those of that era be the judges.

CHAPTER VIII

TALES OF RURAL LAWYERS AND THE COURTS

THE fact that there are many amusing fiascoes in running through the regular grist of rural court cases should not in any way reflect upon the personnel of the members of the legal bar. The section in which most of the following incidents occurred has been noted for a century for the exceptional ability and commanding personality of its lawyers. But any attorney engaged in general law practice is continually turning up something which, if commonly known, would be regarded as ranking high in the field of humor.

An attorney, who during his career became widely known throughout the country in general, was for a long time active in practice as a country lawyer in a little town. No case was too great or too little to command his attention.

The Litigating Horse Dealer

Among his clients was a farmer who was also engaged in horse trading. It might

perhaps be said that horse trading was his principal occupation. This man was an enthusiast. Any horse he happened to own was a living wonder. He sold horses, but most generally his method was to exchange his own for some other horse, each of the parties of the trade trusting to their wits to get the better of the other.

As this man, whose first name was Oliver, was extremely fluent regarding the merits of his horses, there were frequent cases in which the party of the second part was disappointed. When the new owner would compare the horse itself as revealed to him by actual contact and use, with the glowing recommendations of the dealer at the time the trade was made, righteous indignation would often lead to a demand for satisfaction. In such cases he would receive no consideration whatever and if he had the real genuine spunk of the period, he would engage a lawyer and begin legal proceedings at once.

This was at a time when petty litigation was extremely frequent and encouraged by

the legal profession. Pacifists were not in fashion and those who were too dignified to settle disputes with their fists, would maintain their self-respect by starting a lawsuit. This class of court cases is pretty generally frowned upon at present, as the standards of the legal profession have advanced steadily the past century, maintaining a close parallel with the similar ethical development of the medical profession.

When Oliver became involved in one of these occasional disputes, he would promptly refer the matter to his attorney, who generally managed to extricate him from even the most unpleasant situation. There was one occasion, however, when this eminent attorney was almost inclined not to act.

After an unusually successful horse trade, Oliver one day appeared at his attorney's office with a rather grave face.

"Saul," said he, "I traded horses with a man over on Scrabble Hill and he is all stirred up about it. He has put the matter in his lawyer's hands and thinks he is going

to be able to make out a strong case. What do you think I better do about it?"

The lawyer regarded the matter calmly. It was hardly necessary to ask any questions. The details of such transactions were apt to bear a strong similarity in different trades.

"What can you prove?" he asked.

"Hang it! Saul!" said Oliver. "It isn't a question of what I can prove; it is what I have to prove."

The attorney, therefore, although not especially edified at this kind of professional routine, proceeded to give Oliver an outline of the kind of testimony that he should be able to produce to offset the righteous claims of his opponent. Tradition says that Oliver was nearly always prepared to furnish the evidence, having some very accommodating friends and neighbors.

The Attorney Who Scorned Divorce Business

In a certain locality in northern New England there was a journeyman tinsmith who was nearing his thirtieth birthday. This

young man, although possessed of much natural wit and ingenuity in argument, had never exhibited any desire to better his position. A young girl, of seventeen or eighteen years, aroused his ambition and he decided to study law. His mind absorbed information like a sponge, and by teaching school during the day and studying at night, he was able to prepare himself for what proved to be a very satisfactory examination for admission to the bar. His success was immediate. Marrying the girl who had inspired him to a higher walk in life, he became a brilliant figure in the legal annals of this period.

At the height of his career his wife died, and just as he had never manifested the slightest interest in any other girl prior to his marriage, he was equally indifferent to all other women after the death of his wife. But apparently to overcome moments of black depression which assailed him out of business hours, because of his tense grief at the loss of his wife, he gradually acquired intemperate habits. Then followed a strange record for a thoroughly modern court, of fre-



A TYPICAL NEW ENGLAND ELM

quent cases called in their regular order, quietly transferred further down the docket list, because of the murmured report of some tipstaff to the judge that "Jim," who was to try the case, was temporarily incapacitated. Such was the personal regard in which this man was held that there seldom was an instance where an opposing attorney made any objection.

Not inconsistent with the foregoing history, was the absolute refusal of this lawyer to ever have anything to do with divorce practice. Knowing his contempt for that class of law business, an elderly man one day climbed his office stairs and appeared before the eminent lawyer. There ensued a conversation about as follows:

"Jim," said the old gentleman, "I have come to see if I can't engage you to help me get a divorce from my wife."

The lawyer glared at him and then detecting a humorous twinkle in the old man's eyes, "How long have you been married?" said he. "Fifty-two years," was the prompt reply.

Lighting a fresh cigar from the stump of an old one, as he was almost a continuous smoker, the lawyer promptly dismissed the matter.

"No, sir; I shall not undertake to get a divorce for you. But you may go home and tell your wife that if she wants a divorce, I will be glad to act for her and it won't cost her a penny."

The early history of a certain state was associated with considerable difficulty in establishing a distinct separate existence. The early settlers therefore became unusually well informed in the general principles of the jurisprudence of that period. Naturally they did not allow much time to pass after their state organization was assured, before establishing a system of county courts.

The Murderer Who Was Not There That Day

In one of the counties there was all the machinery for carrying on a considerable court business, but affairs were so exception-

ally peaceful that there was very little for the court to do. It was therefore a matter of pride to the inhabitants of that county when it became necessary to try a real red-handed murderer.

The judge had little, if any, experience in murder trials, and felt the importance of the occasion quite seriously. There was great general interest during the trial and the court room was packed. At last the case was ready for the jury which filed out, soon returning with the verdict of guilty. The judge arose and directed the prisoner to stand before him.

“Prisoner at the bar,” said he. “You have been tried by a jury of your peers, and let us hope, superiors, and have been found guilty of the crime charged against you. I therefore sentence you, etc., etc.,” repeating the usual formula, of which the substance was that he should be hanged early in the spring following the present session of court, which was in the late autumn. Then recollecting himself, he said to the prisoner:

“Is there any reason why the sentence should not be imposed upon you?”

The prisoner who had assumed a bored attitude throughout the entire trial, manifested but languid interest.

"I dunno as I have anything to say, except that I don't expect to be there that day."

He was not there that day. The jail was a ramshackle affair at best and the prisoner, after apparently enjoying the hospitality of the county during the extreme cold months of the winter, made his getaway a week or two before the date set for his execution, and was never heard from again.

Perhaps at no time in the history of a certain rural valley was the legal profession more appreciated than it was following a public hearing to, if possible, determine who was responsible for an epidemic of incendiary fires.

A Celebrated Arson Case

Within a relatively few weeks, several sets of unusually fine farm buildings were one after another destroyed by fire. There was an incipient reign of terror developing. Farm-

ers all began to wonder who would be the next victim and little else was talked about in local gatherings.

Another fire occurred, and it was decided that something must be done. Finally a public hearing was announced to take place at an early date and an attorney who lived about ten miles distant was induced to act as interrogator.

On the appointed date the hall was filled to overflowing as few who were anywhere within the radius of the fire zone, considered it wise to remain away. One by one those who had been in attendance at the various fires were called upon to give their testimony. Finally a young man was summoned to the stand who it transpired had been present at every fire. The attorney who conducted the interrogation was a noted cross-examiner. It seemed unusual to him that the witness before him should have found it convenient to be practically the first man at every one of the fires. His manner, however, was friendly and reassuring and he asked a great many questions. Within fifteen minutes the audience

were looking at each other and nodding their heads.

“He’s got the right man,” was the verdict.

The attorney, however, was too discreet to indulge in any dramatic accusations. He dismissed the witness in the blandest manner, after which the hearing was halted and a discussion among leading citizens took place. An elderly man of considerable force and personality was deputized to have a quiet conversation with the young man who had just been cross-examined. The result in less than half an hour was a complete confession. The epidemic of fires was over.

It seemed that the guilty man had at the beginning yielded to an impulse to touch a match to a lock of hay which he saw protruding from a barn in the outskirts of the village. The resultant fire and excitement were apparently too much for a brain never any too well balanced. He found the diversion caused by these fires necessary to his existence. He was sentenced for a long term and died in the penitentiary.

The years following the Civil War were productive of a certain type of attorneys who were more effective with the juries of that period than they are apt to be at present. They cultivated eloquence to the limit of their abilities. An attorney who had been an officer in the Civil War acquired quite a reputation as a spectacular pleader. Especially if an old soldier was in any way involved in the case, his oratory reached unusual heights.

The Attorney Who Justified “Assault and Battery”

An old veteran of two or three wars was on trial at the county court for some form of physical assault. Ordinarily harmless, this old chap would become very pugnacious at times, especially when under the influence of certain fluids. In this case he had done considerable damage to the personal appearance of someone in about his own walk in life and of whom he did not approve. The aggrieved party engaged a lawyer who succeeded in having the case put upon the court calendar for jury trial.

The evidence was very damaging to the old veteran and as there seemed to be no good reason why he should not be taught a lesson, a term in jail seemed extremely imminent, until the attorney for the defense, the officer above referred to, began his argument.

The lawyer was named Johnson, and after making the usual rambling introduction, gradually entered upon a lofty train of thought. He pictured the hero of the two wars as a man to whom the entire community was indebted, and pointed out the fact that even his principal weakness for strong drink was the result of his big heartedness and fraternal spirit. Proceeding with this line of argument he succeeded in convincing the intelligent jury that a man who objected to being battered and bruised by such a hero was not only a poor loser but a pretty cheap sort of man generally. The result was a verdict of "not guilty."

The old veteran was overwhelmed with admiration for his lawyer's ability and his enthusiasm promptly found expression.

Turning to his wife, a withered up old woman of about his own age, he said;

“Hurrah! We can now go home and if we ever have a boy, we will name him Thomas V. Johnson.”

The Lawyer Who Was Going to “Get Over It”

An attorney of unquestioned ability had but one failing and one which was far too common among the legal profession years ago. He was a periodic. At such times his naturally acute business judgment would become rather unstable. Like numerous other lawyers of that period, “Wad,” as he was generally known among his friends, did some insurance business as a side line.

“Wad” was elected to the legislature and immediately took a prominent place. He was an able debater and fluent speaker and exceedingly popular. Coming to the capital city from a week end trip to his home, it was immediately evident that he had been indulging a little too much.

Soon after his return on this occasion Wad wended his way to a certain insurance office to make a series of settlements for collections

he had made in his home town. As soon as the treasurer saw him he recognized the situation, but being personally fond of the man, he hoped to get through with the matter without any complications.

It soon became apparent, however, that Wad was in no condition to settle any accounts. The problems of addition and subtraction were entirely too much for him. The treasurer watched with mingled sympathy and contempt his impotent efforts to group the necessary figures, but finally lost patience.

“You come in some other time, Wad,” said he. “There is no hurry. You can just as well settle this matter some other time.”

The attorney paid absolutely no attention to this suggestion and continued his erratic tussle with the illusive figures. The treasurer who was extremely busy that day, and a model of methodical precision in business details, was thoroughly disgusted.

“Wad,” said he, “you’re in no condition to do business today. You’re drunk. Come in when you get sober and we will settle.”

The exaggerated dignity of the man "under the influence" immediately asserted itself.

"Yes, I'm drunk and you're a d——d fool; I shall get over it and you won't!"

The small town which may perhaps chiefly by reason of geographical location be the county seat, always livens up when the county court is in session. There are always a few cases sufficiently unique to arouse general interest. But there were real thrills at a certain court on one occasion because of the approaching trial of a real genuine bank robber who had been apprehended after he had committed a real crime. The community seemed to some of the inhabitants to be getting thoroughly up to date.

The Story of the Wily Bank Robber

The prisoner was an up-to-date crook without a doubt. He was a professional and wanted elsewhere, but the court in question was permitted to have the glory of "sending him over the road."

The trial was a perfunctory affair, and aside from the testimony, which was somewhat exciting in spots, there was nothing to provide any special entertainment for spectators. The prisoner was sentenced for a term of years, and remanded to the county jail to await the convenience of the sheriff before being taken to the penitentiary in another town.

The session of court ended shortly after, and there was no further cause for delay in placing the prisoner where he could put on the stripes. Arrangements for transfer were made to take place on a certain nearby day.

At the county jail it had been noted that the prisoner had been very much cast down by his conviction. He was listless, showing little desire for food and was extremely pale. Before the day set for his removal it became a question whether he would long be able to make the journey. It was therefore decided to remove him at once.

Accompanied by the sheriff, the prisoner, properly handcuffed, was taken to the train, which after a few miles, was to pass through

a stretch of mountain timberland and on a heavy grade. As the train was approaching this wilderness, the prisoner requested permission of the sheriff to go to the wash room. His mildness and apparent natural amiability together with his extraordinary weakness had aroused the personal sympathy of the sheriff. So he promptly removed his handcuffs and granted his desire, taking his own stand by the door, according to custom. On the heavy grade the train naturally went slowly. The prisoner had slipped the bolt as he went in and nothing further being heard from him the sheriff rapped on the door. There was no response. After a few such attempts to arouse the prisoner who had apparently fainted from weakness, it was decided to force an entrance. As may be naturally expected, the window was open and the prisoner was gone. The train was halted and an immediate search was made and the alarm spread far and wide. Nothing was ever heard of the prisoner again.

The mystery of the sudden extreme pallor and weakness was soon afterwards solved. A

search of the cell recently occupied by the prisoner disclosed a couple of wads of so-called fine cut chewing tobacco which those wise in criminal annals promptly connected with the escape. The prisoner had bound these wads of tobacco under his arm pits and it was the absorption of nicotine thus resulting which, theoretically at least, had produced the symptoms which had so aroused the sympathies of the sheriff.

The Legend of the Pine Tree

The fondness for litigation, especially among certain farmers in olden times, became almost a monomania in some instances. For many years there resided in a tumble-down house on a little farm, a man who with his wife was perhaps as near an approach to poor mountain white as can be found in the New England states. And yet the story had it that he had at one time been a prosperous farmer in one of the most fertile valleys of his state.

According to the legend this man and a neighbor became involved in a dispute as to

the possession of a certain large and lofty pine tree situated on the boundary line of the two farms. The quarrel eventually developed into a lawsuit which was continued from term to term by well-known dilatory tactics of that period. Each of the parties in the dispute had employed able legal counsel. Eventually both of the farmers became bankrupt after exhausting their means in continuing the legal struggle.

The Man Who Wanted to be “Sociable”

In another instance a man possessed of the same mania for legal contest had gradually seen his property absorbed by a capable lawyer. To him he always referred his numerous disputes. When the aggressive litigant was unable to pay money, the attorney would arrange for settlement by note. The notes were transferred into a mortgage and finally the mortgage was foreclosed.

At the general windup of affairs certain farm animals, which were a part of the few visible assets remaining, were sold at auction. It might be expected that the belligerent lover

of lawsuits would have been somewhat cast down under those circumstances. But he was game.

At one time, however, it became necessary for the auctioneer to admonish the man who, although afflicted with an impediment of speech, was seen to be in earnest conversation with a prospective bidder. It was assumed by the auctioneer that he was giving out tips as to which cows about to be sold were most desirable. In an aggressive tone, calculated to be heard by all present, the auctioneer called out:

"Look here, Mr. Thomas! You keep your ideas about these cows to yourself!"

The old man turned about to look at the auctioneer a moment, then with a whimsical glance at the spectators stuttered out his response as follows:

"D——d——dammit; can't a m——m——m——man be sociable?"

CHAPTER IX

SOME EXPERIENCES OF THE YANKEE TRAVELING SALESMAN

WHEN it gradually dawned upon the country merchant that by dealing via the mails with responsible wholesalers and jobbers of the cities, it might not be necessary for him to spend a week or two several times a year going to "market," it incidentally became apparent to the wholesalers and jobbers in question that it might not be a bad idea to visit the merchant in his own store and stimulate his ambition to try out new goods of new styles and designs. The result was the development of a very unique type, the traveling salesman or "drummer."

Perhaps the most conspicuous of these tourists was the grocery salesman. It was necessary for him to interview his trade about every thirty days in order to keep designing rivals from stealing away his customers. As there was a profit in the business, the number of wholesale houses increased, and likewise the

number of their representatives. There gradually developed a very intense competition for all kinds of trade.

The commercial traveler was necessarily a man of optimism and usually endowed with a capacity to endure much physical fatigue. It was lively work covering a good, fair sized territory every thirty days. Naturally it became increasingly difficult for a novice to establish himself in the face of such intense competition.

The Hopeful Young Beginner

A young man who had acquired roseate views of the possibilities of making a fortune as a grocery salesman, started out to cover a new route. Visiting a group of towns in a certain state, he found the merchants were all exceptionally well supplied with everything he himself had to offer, but with courage unabated he kept on, believing that when he arrived at a nearby thriving town with several active dealers, his luck would change.

Reaching this town on a late afternoon train, he hastened to the most prosperous

grocery store. The proprietor was just about to leave the store to "go to supper." He, however, paused to listen with a wearied air while the young man introduced himself, explaining that he expected to travel over that territory every four weeks from that time on and hoped to be able to serve him. The merchant finally spoke:

"You say you expect to come here once a month?"

"I do," was the hopeful reply.

"Well," said the merchant, with a twinkle in his eye. "I think you ought to do well; there have only been thirteen grocery drummers here today."

The young man's enthusiasm was somewhat dampened.

One of the bugbears of the New England traveling salesman who must cover his route at frequent intervals, is the midwinter blizzard. It often requires a good many card games to fill in the waits. These episodes are not without amusing details, but one of these unwelcome events developed little that was humorous.

The Sick Engineer in the Next Room

Late one winter afternoon, two salesmen left a nice comfortable hotel in a little town because the path of duty led them to take a narrow gauge road up into the mountains. It was getting dark; had been snowing heavily all day and the wind was just beginning to take part in the program, frisking the feathery snow, here and there, just to show what an innocent thing a winter breeze can be. But when the train had gotten out of the way from the valley town and was making its laborious way up a steep grade into the mountains, the real force of the wind began to be apparent. The cars would rock back and forth on their narrow carriages, but as there was no record that they had ever actually capsized, everything was cheerful enough in the smoking car. After a few miles, progress began to be very slow, as drifts had accumulated on the track. Finally a trainman came through and said that "Jim" was in mighty bad shape and he didn't know whether he could stick it out to the end of the line or

not. Certain questioning brought out the fact that "Jim" was the engineer who had a high fever and was almost delirious. The air became colder and colder and the wind increased. After several hours, however, the short run of thirty miles was accomplished and the two travelers started for the hotel. It developed, that the hotel was not ostensibly open for business, the proprietor having become peeved at repeated searching parties working in the interest of prohibition. One of the travelers, however, knew the ropes and led the way around through the back kitchen where the low browed graduate of a New York dive, who conducted the tavern, was found and he reluctantly agreed to provide rooms, though they proved to be absolutely without heat.

One of the travelers immediately went to bed, having the foresight to take his fur coat with him for extra covering, but he did not sleep well. The train crew had succeeded in helping the engineer through the drifts to the hotel and established him in a room adjoining that of the salesman. The rooms were communicating and although the door was closed,

there was a wide crack at the top. All night long, under the faithful administrations of the local doctor, the heroic engineer who had stuck to his post and pulled his train through under conditions that would tax all the faculties of a well man, was battling for life. He proved to have an acute form of pneumonia. The night finally passed and the salesman was able to get out of town from which point he went to headquarters in a neighboring city to report. A few days later, being back on the job once more, he saw a funeral cortege coming from the railroad station. They were carrying the body of the engineer.

To the salesman who visits his trade at frequent intervals, life is chiefly made up of customers and hotels. The amusing experiences which every commercial man has are, however, chiefly associated with his various hotel homes. To be able to establish oneself for the night at a cozy hotel where it is allowable to call the clerk and the head waitress by their first names, provides relief from the intense mental concentration necessary in

bringing various customers around to the salesman's way of thinking.

What Happened in the Hotel Barber Shop

The salesman who takes frequent trips is, as before stated, eventually in a position to call everyone in a hotel establishment by their first names, the hotel barber being no exception. One such barber became very widely known to travelers because of his genial qualities and quick wit, as well as his efficiency in carrying on his trade. It was only the occasional visitor to his shop who failed to call him "Dan."

"Dan" not only enjoyed the popularity of the traveling fraternity, but was regarded with high favor by the prominent citizens of the town, most of whom were regular customers. While the atmosphere of the barber shop was cheerful, "Dan" was careful to make sure that there was nothing in that same atmosphere that would be in any way offensive to his more conservative clientele. With unusual skill he was able to give his shop a

somewhat clublike atmosphere which of course helped business.

One day a very discordant element obtruded itself. A well-known, but not greatly admired, local citizen familiarly known to the villagers as "Hen" was having one of his periodical drinking spells. Rambling about in his customary aimless manner under such conditions, he suddenly made his appearance in the shop. A bank president was in the chair and another well-known citizen was "next."

"Dan" gave a quick glance at the intruder, who obviously had no business purpose in coming there, and detecting his condition at once, he told the inebriate man in bland but decisive terms that he better move along. "Hen" was not in a frame of mind to be reasoned with and showed no intention of moving out. He addressed his conversation indiscriminately to all who might be present, much to their annoyance. But "Dan" was equal to the emergency. Suddenly laying down his razor, he stepped quickly to his overcoat which was hanging on a peg and took from one of the pockets a leather pipe case. Wheeling about

and pointing the pipe case at this astonished intruder, he said:

“You get out of here, quick; or I’ll shoot you right in your tracks!”

“Hen” was no hero, drunk or sober, and he fled in consternation to the other end of the village.

Visiting the country stores of New England in wintertime, often provides startling contrasts in the way of hotels. The traveler who spends Tuesday night at a thoroughly modern commercial hotel in a town of 5000 inhabitants, can spend Wednesday night in a similar hotel, if he is traveling in summer via auto. In winter, however, he may find it difficult to arrange for these comforts.

The Salesman Who Was Given a “Warm Room”

A salesman for a western firm who enjoyed the comforts of life, was quite disturbed one evening to find himself in a small mountain village and destined to stay over night at an old-fashioned hotel. This old-time tavern was

one of the oldest buildings in that section of the state and much the oldest of all the hotels of that region. It was built of brick, with small windows and high window sills, the glass being small panes of the Revolutionary period. The sleeping rooms were but narrow cells leading off from a long, dark corridor.

The outdoor temperature was about 20 degrees below zero, and as this hotel had no steam heat, each room being warmed separately, the salesman made a very vigorous demand for a fire in his bedroom. He was promptly assured by the landlord that he should have a fire and a warm room.

Stopping at the hotel was a traveling troop of Indian performers, the male members of which camped out in the old-time dance hall on the second floor. The salesman, who had not slept very well the night before, went to his room early. He found an old-fashioned box stove which was just beginning to throw out a genial heat. He felt very well satisfied with himself that he had made his demands known.

With the door closed, the temperature of the small room soon passed the genial stage.

It became intense. The salesman therefore hastened to open the window, believing that a little 20 degrees below zero air would just about balance the overtime efforts of the stove. He found the lower part of the window sash so thoroughly fixed into a bed of ice that it was immovable. He therefore concluded that if he opened the door into the hall, it would make things about right. This he accordingly did and went back to bed. He was just dozing over when he heard a rustling at the door. He looked out into the dimly lighted hall to see one of the "bucks" belonging to the Indian encampment looking curiously into his room. He therefore concluded that it would be wiser to close the door, as his confidence in the absolute integrity of the members of the troop was not of the Fenimore Cooper type.

Having closed the door, the salesman then attempted to go to sleep, but it was impossible. He arose and opened the stove door and made a careful study of the contents. He found a large green chunk of wood well coaled over and apparently capable of sustain-

ing an abundance of heat during the night. A high pitcher sitting in an old-fashioned bowl contained some water and the luxury loving traveler succeeded finally in slackening the fire to such an extent that he was able to get several hours sleep.

The hotel was of very considerable interest as a historical landmark, but it can be taken for granted that the picturesque history of this hostelry was not appreciated by the traveling salesman.

Modern conditions prevail with the country hotels of northern New England at present. Only a few winters ago, however, a salesman who opened a window of his steam heated sleeping room for air and then woke up to find the faucet in his room frozen, was promptly presented with a bill for damages the next morning by the landlord. It may be said, however, that this hotel is not typical. There are numerous country inns throughout New England which are comfortable in the coldest days in winter.

Story of the Itemized Expense Account

A veteran hardware salesman, named Ed Stone, made two trips a year among his wide circle of customers. He was genial, efficient and popular, and was regarded as a valuable asset by his employers. The oldest member of the firm, quite well along in years, was very prone to petty economies. Looking over some of the travel accounts of several salesmen representing the firm, he came to the conclusion that it would be well to have them itemize their expense accounts. As Ed happened to be at the store, he promptly advised him of the new policy. The salesman who knew the peculiarities of the old gentleman, assured him that it would be perfectly satisfactory to him to make out a detailed report.

Starting out the next week, about one of the first points to be reached was a small city where Ed had always been tolerably sure of a big order. The store was conducted by an old-time merchant who had been gradually pushed into the background by his aggressive

and far less competent son. While there were whispers that the firm were heading in the wrong direction, their credit was still excellent.

So to the young man of the firm, Ed extended the fraternal hand, but soon found that "Tommy," the son, was not in a genial humor. Business was very poor, he was told. They had plenty of goods and would skip the usual spring order. Further parley seemed to promise no results, "Tommy" showing symptoms of irritability.

"Well," said Ed, "I'm sorry you feel that way, but I cannot see any reason why you should not come down to the hotel and have supper with me tonight. Like enough we will find a couple of the boys there and can have a game of whist."

After some persuasion, "Tommy" accepted the invitation, appearing at the hotel soon after the store closed, where he enjoyed as sumptuous a dinner as the ingenuity of Ed could devise. Later on they went to Ed's room, but there is no occasion for any further details, as everything which transpired

can readily suggest itself to any normal imagination by the item which appeared in Ed Stone's expense account for that day.

“February 26th

To getting Tommy Wilson into a frame of mind so that he would order his usual spring bill of goods\$20.00”

Shortly afterward Ed Stone's circumlocutions brought him near enough to the main office so that he ran in over Sunday and handed his expense report to the senior member of the firm. The latter looked it over with great interest for a few seconds and then turned to Ed:

“Why, Mr. Stone,” said he. “What does this Wilson item mean?”

Ed smiled.

“I think,” said he, “I'll have to leave that to your imagination.”

The old man, who was a good citizen and a church man in regular standing, swallowed hard and said:

“Well! Well! I guess you need not bother to itemize your expense reports any more.”

“Two Barrels”

A great asset to the traveling salesman is individuality, especially if it is of the constructive type.

A bakery and confectionery firm had a star traveling salesman who covered a wide range of territory. Somewhat advanced in years, he gradually became afflicted with an impediment in his hearing.

There is often tragedy in some gradually developing infirmity like deafness, but it did not prove necessary for the firm who employed Henry S—to make any change. They were very well satisfied to let Henry stay on the job year after year, until he became quite an old man.

Henry always could be depended upon to get orders. Of course his success in quite a large measure was due to his friendly personality which made him cordially received wherever he went.

There are tricks in all trades and Henry became famous for one which caused many a smile, not only among the storekeepers, but the traveling profession as well.

Whenever in doubt, because of defective hearing, Henry always assumed that his customer was talking business. A star feature of his line was a certain brand of homemade crackers.

"I don't believe I need any crackers today, Henry," said the storekeeper, raising his voice.

"Two barrels, did you say?" said Henry.

The merchant laughed and nodded his head. He knew he could get rid of them sooner or later and Henry was a thoroughly good fellow.

The Old Man Who Was Inveigled Into a Poker Game

In a certain New England town, two hustling citizens bought an old hotel which with certain renovations and alterations, soon became an attractive resort for commercial men. And while new customers flocked to the old hotel, the old rural patrons also proved loyal and the hotel did a thriving business.

One evening three enterprising commercial men began looking about for a fourth partner for the purpose of going into retirement for

a little tussle with the god of Chance; in other words, they were to play poker. No one turning up to take the fourth place, their attention was called to an elderly man with white hair and a long white beard, who seemed to be quite active for his years and, more as a joke than anything else, they invited him to take part in the game. The old gentleman in question lived on a farm and came from a very rural district, therefore according to the usual precedents, he should be expected to gasp with horror at the prospect of being decoyed into a gambling game with three thoroughly up-to-date young travelers. Somehow he did not seem to be disturbed by what the game developed into soon after he had taken his seat.

The traveling men were well supplied with expense money and as they had naturally expected from his moderately prosperous appearance, the old gentleman seemed also to have plenty of funds. The contest lasted far beyond the time when the elderly gentleman with the long white whiskers might be expected to retire to rest, but he did not seem

to be visibly affected by the late hours. The game finally terminated in time to give the commercial men two or three hours of very necessary sleep, after which they had their breakfast, negotiated various small loans to secure expense money and went their several ways. The hotel porter, naturally cognizant of everything that happened in the hotel, tersely explained the entire matter in the following words:

“My Lord! Say, do you know that old chap with the white whiskers? He just cleaned those fellows out of every cent they had!”

To those who knew the “old gentleman,” whose hair became snow white at a little past thirty and who carried that same luxuriant white hair until he was eighty years old, the above incident is but a glimpse of his many sided characteristics. He could be as generous with those who needed friendly sympathy as he could be merciless with those who attempted to overreach him.

CHAPTER X

TRADITIONS OF THE RURAL CHURCH

THE New England pioneers who penetrated the unbroken, trackless forests searching for suitable locations for future homes and who spared no physical effort in establishing these homes, would have regarded with contempt, if not with horror, the present day tendencies toward shorter and shorter hours of labor. For in their dictionary the term "recreation" was practically unknown.

No new settlement could be regarded as fairly established until it possessed a school-house and a church. Naturally this involved much extra labor and personal sacrifice.

So the New England tourist of the present day is constantly finding these little old-fashioned emblems of self-denial tucked away, not only in small hamlets but at the cross roads. The influx of numerous people of different foreign nationalities and of the different religions, has in many instances left the churches a difficult problem, financial and otherwise, to

the limited number of communicants yet remaining of the old New England stock.

Before so many of the younger generation became ambitious for city life and left the home farms to pass into the hands of strangers, these churches were very active centers of culture and uplift.

However, with human nature as it is, it could hardly be expected that there should not be some trying incidents connected with the close intimacies of the country congregation. The new pastor soon found that each of his parishioners had a very distinct individuality which was often calculated to jar upon other individualities of his flock. The nerve strain incident to preserving harmonious relations under these conditions was no doubt responsible in numerous instances for the "nervous dyspepsia" which has so frequently afflicted country ministers.

In the early days when barter rather than cash was the chief means of exchange, the parson's salary was necessarily small, at least in actual cash. To make up to him what

they were unable to deliver in the way of real money, the pastor was made the subject of countless acts of generosity in the form of loads of wood, potatoes, pork and various other elements of family subsistence. However, the crowning act of generosity on the part of parishioners was the annual Donation Party.

The Story of the "Raised" Biscuits

In a certain parish there was a clergyman whose family did not take very kindly to these rural substitutes for real money. Probably the minister's wife had "seen better days" before she became the partner of a struggling country pastor. And quite likely she may have expressed her disapproval of the stingy characteristics of some in the parish in the presence of her children.

The annual Donation Party at this parsonage was a great success in point of numbers, but the donations themselves were rather small. Each matron of the community was of course expected to furnish her share of the refreshments. Probably there was not sufficient

team work in the "Ladies' Aid Society." At any rate, the pastor's wife found herself, at the conclusion of the evening's festivities, in possession of an extraordinarily large number of exceedingly durable "raised biscuits," the other donations being far below the proper standard.

It became necessary for the pastor and his wife to visit an adjoining town the next day, their children being left behind. During the absence of the parents there were developments which scandalized the entire neighborhood and filled the pastor and his wife with horror.

Shortly after their parents went away the children got busy. The residents of the neighborhood passing the parsonage during the day noted with mingled amusement and indignation the fact that each one of the wooden pickets surrounding the ample enclosure of the parsonage was surmounted by a raised biscuit.

It was a very hot Sabbath, but the faithful residents of the parish were practically all in

attendance. The parson accepted even the most extreme views of the tense theology of that period. Therefore the faithful mothers of the congregation arose early in order that they might prepare all the children of walking age and upwards to appear in clean clothes and clean faces by the time the last bell stroke was heard.

The Small Boy Who Scandalized the Congregation

In accordance with the custom of that period, there were no free pews, except for the extremely poor. The owner of each of these sittings after carefully packing his family away in the limited space available for that purpose, closed the door of his pew.

As before stated, it was a very warm day and little "Jabe," who for some family reason or other was at present living with his three maiden aunts, came to church attired only in his gingham shirt and cotton trousers. Jabe was not old enough to appreciate the solemnity of the occasion and it was beyond his understanding how people could be so foolish

as to be willing to sit perfectly still for two mortal hours in church. Therefore, when he found that his attendance at church was inevitable that morning, he looked about to provide himself with diversion for the long period of hateful inactivity. The maiden aunts were very devout. They gave their entire attention to the parson. Except to occasionally lay a restraining hand on the "wiggling" urchin who was stationed between them, they seemed to have forgotten him.

In the pew immediately behind little Jabe and his aunts, there were several young girls. Even at this time it was often necessary to frown upon the effervescent spirits of girls in their teens. It can therefore be readily understood how horrified and scandalized were the "pillars" of the church, when in the midst of the service, one of these young ladies squealed hysterically. The minister ceased his discourse and one of the deacons hastily demanded an explanation, which even in that austere congregation seemed to be not only satisfying but amusing. Little Jabe on his way to church, loitering behind his faithful aunts, had

spied a small snake on the roadside, pounced upon it and tucked it inside his little gingham shirt. When the pastor had got well along in "fifthly," Jabe had taken the snake by the tail and allowed his head to emerge from his shirt front with the above named disastrous consequences to the dignity of the morning service.

Without doubt the first essential for the success of the country pastor is the diplomatic instinct. He may be lacking in many other ways, and yet continue to retain the good will and support of his parish, provided that he can get in intimate contact with his people without wounding their peculiar sensibilities.

The "Driveling Idiot"

A well-known clergyman, who was extremely popular in several parishes, tells with much delight, his experience with a certain amiable old lady who received him very cordially one day when making pastoral visits.

This minister was a comparatively newcomer in the community and had never had

an opportunity to really make the acquaintance of the lady in question. The conversation covered the normal range of small town subjects, the lady showing very considerable interest in the minister and his prospects and becoming more and more affable as the conversation continued.

Finally it became the proper thing for the minister to gracefully withdraw, which he did despite the urgent protest of his hostess to linger a little longer. As he was about to take his departure, she gave him a most approving look and dismissed him with the following words:

"I am so glad we have had this little visit. I am sure we shall all like you ever so much. Do you know you greatly remind' me of the minister who was here when my husband and I first went to housekeeping. He died a driveling idiot.

In a remote village there was located a clergyman who divided his energies between two small parishes. Diplomacy was not his strong point. Probably not one-third of his

hearers were communicant members. And under his austere ministrations, many who were fairly regular in their attendance showed a marked reluctance to allow themselves to be enrolled officially.

In consequence of this unwillingness to assume church responsibilities, the pastor held very pessimistic views as to their probable future and did not hesitate to make it fairly clear and definite when occasion permitted.

A great opportunity came to him and it may be truthfully said that he made the most of it.

The Love-Cracked Suicide

Away back in the hills there was a young man of nineteen or twenty who had become greatly interested in a somewhat frivolous maiden of sixteen years. Psychologists of the present would have probably pronounced Jim's development as about equal to that of ten or twelve years. He was distinctly defective mentally, but a good worker on the farm and of generally amiable tendencies. Theology to him was as remote a topic as Babylonian literature.

THE TONIC OF YANKEE HUMOR

But Jim had very definite views as to this girl. He was infatuated to the point of desperation.

The young lady in question considered it a great joke. One evening she would be very bland and agreeable and the next time Jim appeared, she would be very much the reverse. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the details which are too familiar to most people to require explanation. She was having a beautiful time tormenting poor Jim. One evening she carried it a little too far and Jim left her convinced that life was not worth living. Retiring to a lonely hilltop with a heavily loaded shotgun, he departed this life with almost incredible rapidity.

This unfortunate event created a wide sensation. Overwhelmed with remorse, the young lady could not sufficiently abase herself. Therefore, when the funeral was held in the little country church, she appeared first among the mourners, although there is not the slightest probability that she would ever have married poor Jim had he lived to continue his courtship.

Knowing Jim's amiable qualities, all of the community were sympathetic except the pastor. To him this situation presented the opportunity of a lifetime.

The keynote of the funeral discourse was soon made apparent by the text:

“And Paul cried with a loud voice: Do thyself no harm.”

Whereupon the astonished congregation found that instead of having gathered to hear words of sympathy for the family bereaved by the insane act of a love-crazed youth, they were to hear words of condemnation and vituperation with direful warnings of eternal misery.

The more intelligent people listened with disgust, while those who seldom, if ever, entered the church, looked on with amusement. With the completion of the services, the people gladly withdrew from the ministerial presence and when safely outside, their general views were summarized by the comments of the local cobbler.

“Well, the parson certainly had it in for poor Jim; he held him out over Tophet for about an hour and then kicked him over in!”

“There is a Lion in the Way”

On a certain July Sabbath the afternoon service in the little church seemed to drag. There had been a long morning service, and a session of the Sunday school earlier in the day, so it perhaps may not seem surprising that some of the congregation were seen to nod at times and then with renewed effort, concentrate their attention upon the minister.

The pastor of the parish was greatly beloved for his personal characteristics, but not greatly admired as a preacher. His oratorical process consisted of slow, rambling talks in a low monotone intermingled with occasional emphatic remarks in a very loud voice.

The breeze which had been coming through the open windows died away and the congregation became more and more drowsy. The pastor, amiable and considerate, was the last preacher in the world to resent somnolence on the part of his audience.

The sermon progressed and the pastor's thought was being slowly and laboriously laid before the few who were still awake. When

he found it consistent with his system of discourse, he often projected an allegorical picture upon the mental processes of his hearers.

Suddenly raising his voice until it echoed and re-echoed throughout the edifice, he shouted:

“But there is a lion in the way!”

A rustle passed over the congregation and all the drowsy ones sat up, some few looking around hurriedly in various directions but becoming speedily reassured.

The fact that a combined circus and menagerie was advertised to exhibit in a nearby town within a few days might possibly have had something to do with the unexpected success of the pastor's allegory.

The enrollment in a certain community church was relatively small because of a diversity of the religious beliefs among the various families. Those who did not belong to the faith represented by the minister were indisposed at that period to accept membership in the church, even if they might be fairly regular in their attendance and assist

in the church financially. Others, of course, were indifferent altogether.

The Man Who Borrowed "Arabian Nights" from a Christian Woman

A man, naturally bright, but of limited education, had an unusually good excuse for not attending church. He had a very large family which taxed all his energies to support, and was sadly lacking in church-going apparel. One day, while at the house of a neighbor, he asked the woman of the household, who was a conscientious church worker, to loan him a book to read.

Thinking that this man might enjoy tales of the marvelous, the woman loaned him a copy of an expurgated edition of "Arabian Nights." He took the book away with him and kept it for some time.

Finally one evening he brought it back. When asked if he had read the book through, he said he had read part of it, but it had troubled him. Asked for a more definite explanation, he expressed himself as follows:

"Well," said he, "to tell the plain truth, I was shocked when I started reading. I could not understand how any Christian woman could loan me such a pack of lies as there is in that book!"

All of which well illustrates the different standards of the Victorian period as compared with those of the present day.

The congregation of a certain New England church, especially the feminine portion, were full of appreciation, admiration and sympathy for one of the deacons.

The Woman Who Was Not Going to be a Pack Horse

This man wore a constant expression of submission and meekness. He was an exemplary citizen in every respect and was faithful in his attendance to the duties of his office.

There was a special reason why the women of the church so highly approved of the deacon. It was reported that his wife was very impatient with him.

Gradually there developed an atmosphere of coldness toward the wife, more than counterbalanced by the sympathetic friendliness toward her husband. This was somewhat irritating to the lady in question, who so far as she knew had never transgressed any of the general laws of society nor of the church. After a while the deacon's wife became very unreconciled at the situation and from dwelling upon the matter she became probably more irritable than a deacon's wife should be.

One day some unfortunate event led this woman to express herself more freely to her husband than she had done for a long time. As usual he accepted her remarks with docility and calmness.

The deacon went to his room and the wife went about her tasks in a tumult of dissatisfaction with herself and the entire situation. She recalled legends of the deacon's early life which indicated he was of a very high temper. If he had only said something in self-defense, the situation would be more bearable. Shortly afterward she had occasion to go up stairs and as her felt slippers made little

noise, she approached the conjugal chamber unnoted. Hearing the sound of her husband's voice, she stopped at the nearly closed door to listen.

The deacon was engaged in prayer and she listened to hear him express his thanks that although a wilful, perverse person, he had been permitted to have a cross to bear, or rather a thorn in the flesh in the form of his wife, in consequence of which he could develop patience, endurance and the various divine virtues.

The deacon's wife listened to the foregoing in amazement and then it all dawned upon her. Pushing open the door and quickly confronting her astonished husband, she said:

"I understand it all now. Perhaps you think I am going to be a pack horse to carry you to Heaven, but you will find out differently."

The legend says that the subsequent amiability and angelic sweetness of the wife eventually caused the deacon to appear almost irascible at times.

Among the regular attendants at a little country church, were a rather attractive, enterprising young lady and a very bashful young man.

The Enterprising Deacon Who Proposed at the Grave

As may often be observed, under such circumstances, the vivacious young lady possessed great attractiveness in the eyes of the young man, but held back by his natural diffidence, he failed to make his admiration definitely known to the girl. She was not lacking in other admirers and so it happened that when the young man in question finally developed sufficient courage to ask the young lady to marry him, he was informed in the most gracious manner that while she had always esteemed him highly as a friend and might have even had a greater interest in him, a more self-confident rival had secured her promise to marry him.

The young man was naturally very much cast down. The apparent admission on the young lady's part that his answer might have

been different had he been a little more prompt in making his wishes known, was especially depressing to him.

A few years passed and the young woman, who had apparently lived happily with her husband, was unfortunately left a widow. Her former admirer decided that he would not be backward this time, but just as soon as any decent period had passed, he would resume paying his addresses and thereby fore-stall any of the other eligibles of the community. He called upon the young woman and was graciously received and thus encouraged proceeded to carry on his courtship with a vigor and enthusiasm that to his own highly developed sense of the fitness of things, seemed to border upon impropriety. Finally he brought matters to a climax by again offering his hand and fortune to the blooming widow. Greatly to his chagrin he was informed, as before, that she was promised to another man.

This was hard luck indeed and the disappointed wooer was almost inclined to resort to that quite common rural expedient and

marry some other girl "out of spite." But somehow this did not seem to square with his conscientious scruples and in fact there was no other girl about who seemed to attract him. It was a depressing situation indeed.

But, as sometimes happens, she who had been maid, wife, widow and again wife, once more became a widow. The twice disappointed devotee decided this time there would be no delays due to a fantastic sense of what was suitable and proper.

Accordingly the very next evening he called to see the doubly bereaved woman. She met him very cordially and his hopes arose high. Feeling that he had already made his regard for her sufficiently clear so that there need be no time lost in preliminaries, he gave but a few minutes' consideration to discussing the weather and other common topics before proceeding to the matter at hand. He asked her to marry him.

The young woman gazed at him sympathetically a moment and then murmured:

"I am so sorry but I am already engaged; Deacon Harris proposed at the grave!"

CHAPTER XI

TALES OF RURAL THRIFT

THERE are probably few better schools for the development of thrift than the small New England farm, which although necessarily limited in its capacity to produce an income, still requires a considerable investment in necessary equipment. Those courageous, hard working couples who bring up a family upon one of these small homesteads, find it exceedingly hard to make ends meet and may quite likely often find themselves at the end of the year in the state of mind shown by the humble tiller of a Vermont farm who when asked what kind of a season he had had, replied:

“I cannot say that we have made any money this year, but we have got considerable growth on the young ones.”

The Old Friend and the Load of Hay

For many years a family had subsisted upon a small farm which was a source of

profit chiefly to a money lender some fifteen miles distant and made secure by means of a very energetic mortgage. It mattered not what the family necessities might be, provision must always be made on the first day of April for the payment of the interest.

One April first, when "Uncle Aaron" had traveled the fifteen miles laboriously through the mud to make his annual payment, he seemed to the holder of the mortgage to be somewhat depressed. As he was normally a very cheerful man, the money lender asked him how things were going. He was informed that "Uncle Aaron" was exceedingly short of hay with which to feed his stock until the grass in his pasture had made sufficient start to justify his turning his cattle out to seek their own living.

"Well! well! Uncle Aaron," was the reply. "I have a whole barn full of hay at my farm up the Branch and you can take your horse and wagon, go up there and get a load for your cattle and it won't cost you a cent."

Uncle Aaron made his way homeward with a light heart. To be sure the roads were

in a fearful state, but his old mare was faithful and reliable and he felt sure she could make the journey and take home a pretty fair load of hay for his lean and always expectant cows.

A couple of days later with his horse and hay wagon he made the journey, securing as much hay as he thought his horse could get home with over the muddy roads. Apparently Uncle Aaron overestimated the old mare's capacity, as when he was yet six or eight miles from home she seemed to have lost all courage. He could hardly get her along the road. Finally he remembered that at a farm a short distance ahead, there lived an acquaintance of his who would probably be glad to put him up for the night. He succeeded in persuading his reluctant horse to cover the remaining distance and turning into the farm road observed his old friend looking at him curiously, but who quickly approached and welcomed him gladly.

"Just drive into the barnyard," said he, "and put your horse in a stall, give her some supper and then we will go in the house. My wife will be glad to make your acquaintance."

THE TONIC OF YANKEE HUMOR

This was indeed a haven of rest for Uncle Aaron. With the old mare well fed and furnished with a comfortable bed of straw to sleep on, as his friend had plenty of straw, although he admitted being very short of hay, Uncle Aaron accepted gladly the hospitality of his friend's wife who served an excellent supper. Such cordiality was really delightful after so weary a day.

The evening passed in reminiscences of boyhood days, and the occasion was enlivened by several pitchers of cider which in turn recalled jolly old songs in which "Uncle Aaron" and his host joined with zest. It was a late hour before the old friends retired to rest.

Uncle Aaron slept soundly and late. He was awakened to hear with horror the clock striking nine. Breakfast must have been over at least two hours, if not more. Leaping from the bed, Uncle Aaron hastily proceeded to dress, but his attention was called to a chamber window by the bellowing of cattle. Looking out he saw his host halfway across the field engaged in some farming task, while a large herd of cattle were in the barnyard

eagerly consuming what seemed to be about the last of his load of hay. Hastening from the house and chasing the cattle back into the meadow, where they had evidently been eagerly searching for an occasional bite of dead grass, Uncle Aaron accepted a late breakfast with numerous apologies to his hostess, harnessed his horse and dejectedly turned his way homeward. The load which the old mare had occasion to haul over the still sticky roads, did not seem to be much of an embarrassment the rest of the way home.

The sad feature of this melancholy tale, to Uncle Aaron, was the ever present doubt as to the real good intentions of his old friend in turning his hungry cows into the meadow that morning and leaving the gateway insecurely fastened.

The ambitious proprietor of a small farm is naturally somewhat perturbed when winter finds him with insufficient forage for his stock. It means that he must go to the expense of buying supplies from his more fortunate neighbors, or that he must sell some of his cattle at a sacrifice.

The Man Who Worked a Confidence Game on His Cows

The owner of a little mountain farm found himself as winter approached with a shortage of hay, but more dry straw than usual. The question therefore was how to enthuse his cattle with the idea of making one good, substantial meal per day of the straw. It should be understood incidentally that the grain had been threshed out of this straw, leaving just the residue, which from the standpoint of the average experienced bovine citizen was exceedingly unpalatable.

The experiment was tried of feeding straw to the cattle in the manger in the way hay was fed, but with very unsatisfactory results. The cows nosed over the straw with badly concealed disgust. When it became necessary to feed hay, practically all the straw had to be removed. It was a discouraging situation but Yankee ingenuity, which has so often stood the test, did not fail in this instance.

Taking into careful consideration the exceedingly complex psychology (?) of the aver-

age cow, the owner had a very bright idea. He hastily pitched a large quantity of straw out into the barnyard where the cattle went out to drink, making as high a pile of it as possible; this he surrounded with a rickety fence.

The next day, at the normal time for the straw ration, the cattle were turned into the yard, and gazed curiously at the straw pile. Watching at some distance, the farmer saw one or two cows approach the stack and thrusting their heads through the ramshackle fence, nibble cautiously at the straw. The owner promptly rushed into the yard and chased the cattle away.

Again the farmer watchfully waited, noting with gleeful enthusiasm the marked change in the attitude of his cattle toward the straw. That which had been scorned by them when fed as a legitimate ration, now seemed to assume new and seductive attractions.

He again drove them away and went to his house for the noonday meal. When he returned an hour or two later the temporary fence was completely demolished, while the

unusual abdominal distention of his flock of cows gave abundant evidence of the success of his experiment.

There are few legends of unusual thrift which come down out of the past involving the medical profession. The country doctor has usually worked hard, gone without sleep, trusted patients to whom no one else would think of giving credit, and died poor.

“Stew 'Er Down”

There were exceptions, however. A doctor who had for many years enjoyed a fairly lucrative practice and who had shown unusual efficiency in holding his expenses at a low figure, gradually found himself handicapped by the infirmities of age with a naturally diminishing professional income.

Although the old doctor was in affluent circumstances for that period, it was very depressing to him not to be able to lay aside the usual amount each year. He accordingly resorted to the extremes of economy. The doctor lived alone except for a housekeeper,

and having had a misunderstanding with her, found himself left entirely to his own devices. He accordingly engaged a half-grown boy to come and stay with him and "do chores for his board."

The boy did not find the environment especially exhilarating. The old man was very irascible and hard to please. Furthermore his menu was rather too simple to meet the requirements of a growing boy.

One evening returning from school, the young man hustled to do his outdoor tasks in order to prepare for an early supper. He had even more than his normally excellent appetite. In fact he was practically famished. He hoped therefore that the old doctor would give instructions for a tolerably elaborate meal.

But he was greatly disappointed. Seating himself near the kitchen range, the old doctor who commonly held his cane in his hand, even when sitting in his easy chair, testily gave instructions to the boy to make a hasty pudding, prepared of course by sifting fine cornmeal into a kettle of boiling hot water

until the right admixture is made, and then allowing it to cook for a short time.

According to the instructions, the youngster soon had the kettle boiling and brought forward an ample supply of the cornmeal, the old man watching every movement. Taking spoonfuls of the meal in one hand, he stirred vigorously with the other, meantime sifting in the meal. In his eagerness to prepare a sufficient quantity of the food to satisfy his youthful craving, the boy had put an unusual amount of water in the kettle. But when he had sifted in about half enough meal to produce the requisite combination with the water, he was abruptly brought to a halt by the old doctor.

"Hold on there, boy!" said he. "You have enough meal in there. Stew 'er down."

The old man's word was law and there was nothing for the youngster to do but to speed up the fire and stir the contents of the kettle until the evaporation of the superfluous water had brought the food mixture to the right consistency.

The boy decided that in the interest of self-preservation he had better hunt for a new job.

“Never Mind, I Can Cut It”

Probably no more elaborate form of thrift has ever been carried out than that of the old-time widow of small fortune and the determination to live on her income. One of this type of widows succeeded in making herself a social leader among a considerable circle of women who were in much more comfortable circumstances financially. The airs and graces of this old lady were not looked upon with special admiration by the men of the community, but when an exceedingly amiable married woman of the neighborhood was invited with her husband to have supper with the widow, she prevailed upon her reluctant husband to go with her.

They were received cordially by the hostess who gave most gracious attention to the husband. He was not especially responsive and his wife looked on with considerable anxiety lest he should somehow allow his dis-

approval of the widow to show out in the conversation.

Everything went smoothly, however, and the amiable wife began to feel quite at ease. Called to the dining room, the table was found to be set out in very attractive style and lavishly supplied with everything except things to eat. The food exhibit was exceedingly meager.

They took their seats and the old gentleman gruffly replied to the prattle of the widow and seemed to be making a pretense of enjoying his meal.

Finally, however, that occurred which the wife had feared, and she felt disgraced for life.

As the final artistic touch of the meal, the widow turned to the pie which was apparently destined for dessert, cut it with great precision exactly through the center, next dividing one of the halves into three exactly equal parts. She then passed the pie to the amiable wife aforesaid, who removed one of the geometrical portions with the grace and

ease customary on such occasions. The widow then passed the pie to the husband.

Perhaps the old man was actually in that state of undernourishment which produces such dissatisfaction in the masculine mind; perhaps he was inspired by a sardonic sense of humor. What he did was to reach out and take the half pie yet uncut and remove it to his plate. His wife looked on with horror.

“Why, papa,” said she, “that part of the pie is not cut.”

The old man smiled at her grimly.

“Never mind,” said he. “I can cut it.”

The impression should not be acquired that New England thrift and stinginess are synonymous. A person can be very economical and still be generous and considerate.

The Empty Flour Barrel

A young married woman, whose husband was not regarded as a very good “provider” and who had been housekeeping a year or two, was quite flattered one afternoon at receiving calls by two estimable old ladies of

the neighborhood. It may be taken for granted that they knew pretty nearly all the facts regarding the young couple in question. And their disapproval of the husband was about equally balanced by their sympathy for the wife.

After devoting an hour or two to conversation with her guests, the young housekeeper excused herself in order that she might prepare the five o'clock supper. Styles of entertainment naturally change according to the times, but at that period no farm supper table with guests present would be considered as properly spread without an abundant supply of hot soda biscuits which would be made more palatable by serving some kind of fruit sauce.

Shortly after the young hostess had set about her task of preparing supper, a pounding was heard in the kitchen. The two old ladies looked at each other significantly. The pounding continued. The hollow sound could suggest but one thing. The housewife was making a desperate effort to gather up enough flour from a nearly empty barrel to make the biscuits *de rigueur* for supper.

The old ladies became more and more uneasy and the conversation died away. Finally one of them arose.

"Do you know, I'm going home! It doesn't seem to me as though I could swallow a mouthful of one of those biscuits. That poor thing doesn't have half enough to eat!"

While the other lady was hesitating, the hostess re-entered the room. She of the uneasy conscience had already put on her wrap. The hostess protested but with no results. Her decision being unalterable, the other guest decided that it would be more diplomatic for her to make an excuse also. And the ladies departed to their homes, each of them more disgusted with Jake's improvidence than before they had apparently encountered the direct evidence that his poor wife must be going hungry.

This was many years ago and probably not even millionaires now buy their flour in barrels. But just because poor "Jake" had been a little slow about finding the wherewithal to lay in perhaps a year's stock of flour for

himself and wife, in one package, his wife's social status received a serious jolt.

Under the strictly home rule township system of the New England states, only the large towns have their own resorts for the "down-and-outs" known as "poor farms."

The Town Pauper Who Made an Epigram

The small towns have from the most remote days generally arranged to have the chronic town pauper boarded out in some family. Naturally people in comfortable circumstances are not likely to furnish entertainment for these unfortunates, who are generally farmed out by the year in homes where the very moderate compensation for board would be of financial assistance in meeting the year's expenses.

"Uncle Hiram" had recently been transferred to the care of a family which was not noted as given to a luxurious menu. There was no doubt sufficient food, but it was very

plain and "Uncle Hiram" was naturally somewhat of an epicure.

One day he appeared at the residence of the poor master and seemed to be more dejected than usual. Suspecting that something was wrong, the official began to ask questions.

"Well, Uncle Hiram, how are you getting along at your new home?"

Uncle Hiram was rather non-committal in his reply, seemingly reluctant to make complaints, but after some urging he proceeded to make his ideas clear in the following long remembered statement.

"Mr. Thomas's folks are very good folks; but they have everything ter buyee; and nothin' ter buy it with."

As there was no evidence that Uncle Hiram did not fare as well in the menu as the rest of the family, it was not considered necessary to try and hunt him up a new boarding place.

The Conscientious Neighbor Who Ran An Account

It is a common belief that excessive thrift is a continual temptation to dishonesty, but such is not necessarily the case. Perhaps there is no more marked example of that exactitude in business transactions which so frequently leads to the charge of stinginess than the instance recorded of the obliging man who was asked by his neighbor to kindly extend a little helpful supervision over the efforts of his young boys to carry on the farm during his own necessary absence for a few weeks. He offered to pay liberally for all the time required in carrying out this plan.

The man cheerfully consented to do all he could for the youngsters while their father was away.

The boys being carefully instructed as to their duties in his absence, the father started on his journey well content that everything would be all right. On his return he found that all had worked out as he had expected.

The farm business had gone smoothly and when the obliging neighbor presented his bill, carefully itemized, it was promptly paid and with much pleasure.

The bill was carefully preserved as a souvenir for many years. It comprised a considerable number of items, each representing some small service for which the charge was accordingly trivial. Of course it is impossible, and neither is it desirable, to go into details regarding this bill, but one item may give a clue as to the conscientious, methodical and business-like habits of the man who presented it.

October 21st:—To helping roll log over . . . ic.

That which has appeared heretofore in this chapter illustrates the various phases of the habitual economy which has made the Scotch, the New Englanders and other nationalities take so leading a place in modern civilization. But there is another instance of the economical instinct which stands out in very unpleasant contrast with the foregoing.

The Thrifty Man Who "Swore Off" Using Tobacco

A well-to-do farmer had reached quite an advanced age and had been recently left alone by the death of his wife. He had no children and no obvious reason for denying himself anything within reason that would help to allay his natural loneliness. But such a hold had frugal habits taken upon him that one December he resolved that on January first he would discontinue for all time his one indulgence, *viz.*, "fine cut" tobacco, utilized in the manner made famous and conspicuous by many eminent Americans during the preceding century.

Accordingly, having reached this decision, this model citizen began to plan ahead. He found that his supply of "fine cut" was in considerable excess of his normal requirements. He therefore speeded up the matter somewhat by increasing his daily allowance. But when the thirty-first day of December arrived, he found himself with several days' supply on hand.

There were acquaintances who would on request have cheerfully obliged him by taking over his reserve stock. But this plan made no appeal. He resolved to sit up until midnight, if necessary, and consume the last of that "fine cut" himself.

He carried out his plans according to program. But even his thoroughly seasoned physique rebelled. The next day he was seriously ill. And his funeral took place a week or two later.

CHAPTER XII

CHEERFUL TALES OF NEIGHBORLY INTERCOURSE

THE impression may be easily acquired by the reader that the collector of these authentic reminiscences is inclined to look with favor upon those whose personalities are exhibited in these pages. Such an impression is probably correct as it is not human nature to comment too sarcastically upon that which adds to the joy of life.

In the average conservative rural neighborhood of New England, it is regarded as excellent policy to cultivate the semblance of cordiality in neighborly associations with special regard for humorous intercourse whenever possible because people of even more than average human frailty may have occasion to do kindly acts. Therefore, it is seldom that neighborhood friction becomes openly demonstrative.

The boy or girl who has been raised in an atmosphere of forbearance and who has been

taught to avoid any outward display of personal dislike, has acquired a very useful lesson. This may explain to a certain extent the ability of the transplanted Yankee to avoid antagonisms in neighborhoods in which there may be, generally speaking, less personal restraint.

“Am I Ben Jackson, or Am I Not?”

It would have been perhaps natural for a certain Ben Jackson to have resented what happened to him one sultry afternoon, but so far as the record shows, if he had any such feeling he kept it carefully to himself.

Ben Jackson had been to town a few miles away with a load which he delivered with a yoke of oxen attached to a primitive cart of earlier days. At that time it was but the most natural thing in the world that there should have been included in Ben's purchases at the country store, a bottle of rum. It must not be understood by this that Ben was an intemperate man, for such was not the case. Like nearly everybody else of that era, including deacons, clergymen, as well as

Indians, he considered that his health and that of his family required that they have "something in the house" at all times.

On his way home with an empty cart and a docile pair of oxen, progress was necessarily slow. A man who rises at three or four o'clock in the morning in order to put in a fair day's work before nine o'clock in the evening, has an excuse for becoming drowsy at times of inaction. Ben had sampled the rum, found it good and tried it again, after which, knowing that his oxen would probably find their way through the coming strip of woodland without any guidance from himself, he stretched out upon the cart and was soon fast asleep.

In the meantime the oxen had leisurely picked their way through the woods until they came to a little opening at one side of the road where there was some green grass. Having no one to restrain their movements, they turned away from the road and began to refresh themselves. Just about that time two young men came along who knew Ben very well and who promptly grasped the

situation. The little opening at the roadside was rather rough ground and they could easily picture the oxen tipping the cart to such an angle that Ben would roll off and possibly be injured. It was therefore but a naturally kind act for them to guide the oxen safely into a little arbor, release them from the cart and leave their friend to enjoy his nap in safety. Incidentally they decided to sit down in nearby obscurity and watch developments.

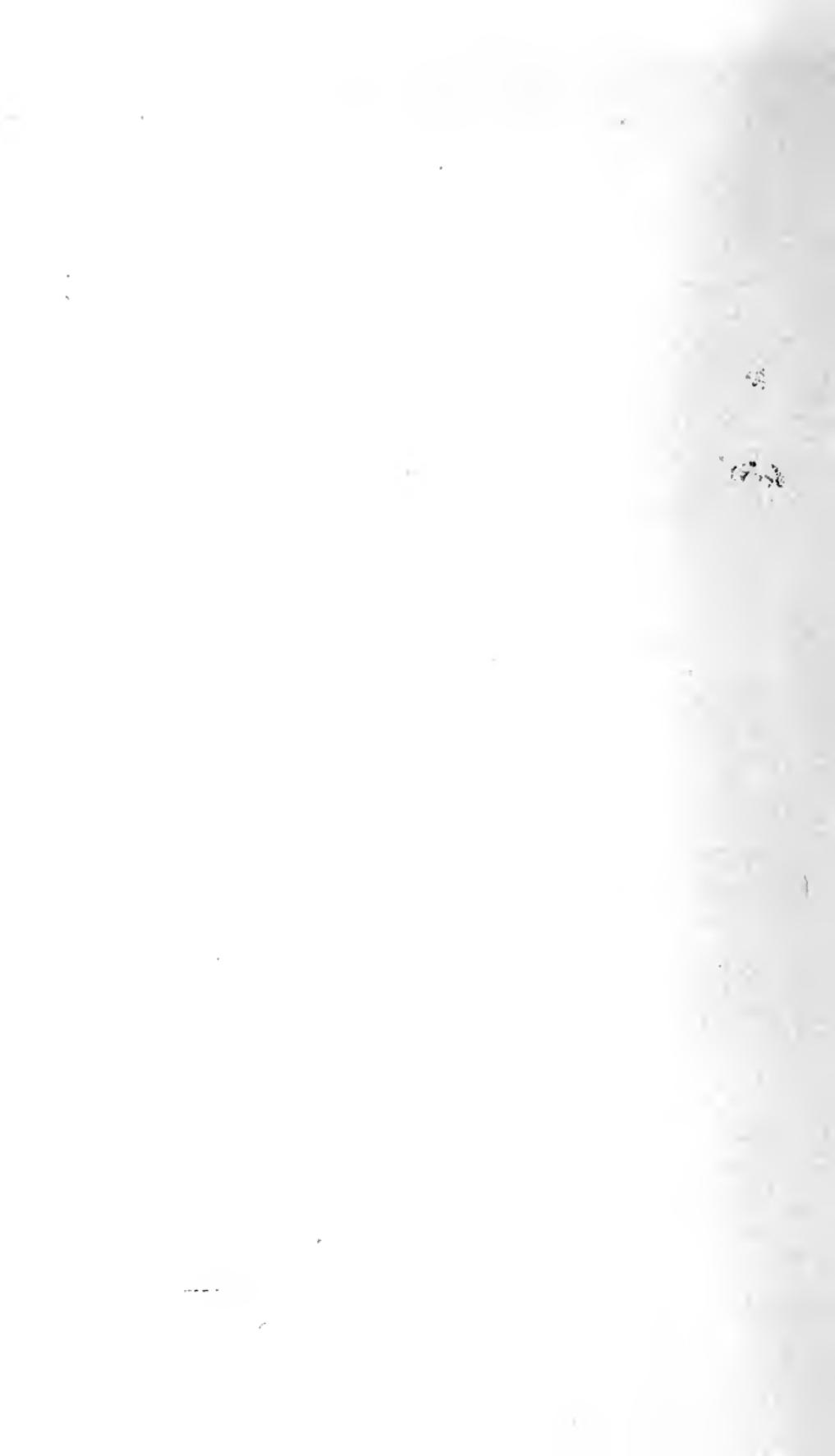
Ben's nap lasted for considerable time. But finally a swarm of mosquitoes aroused him to semi-consciousness. He was surrounded by trees and the entire scene was vague and unfamiliar. It seemed to him that it must all be a dream. He began to talk and his kind friends, before mentioned, listened eagerly.

"Am I Ben Jackson, or am I not? If I am Ben Jackson, I have lost a yoke of oxen. If I am not Ben Jackson, I have found a cart."

It can be easily understood that the friends in ambush soon reassured Ben as to his identity. Just how much of the rum was left



WHITE BIRCHES OF NEW ENGLAND



when he finally arrived home does not appear in the record.

It will be noted that in this instance a practical joke was played upon an unsuspecting citizen which placed him in a ridiculous light. However, if the same practical joke had resulted in anything like personal injury or damage to property, it would have been met with local disgust or indignation, all of which indicates merely inherent common sense.

In the more leisurely days it was the custom that friends or neighbors meeting while driving on the highway, would stop their teams and have a little chat in the roadway. An exchange of jovial banter under such conditions was not only frequent but expected. As an example there was the chance meeting between Mr. Peck and Mr. Wells.

“The Farther You Go the Better They Are”

Mr. Peck, who had recently removed from his native town some dozen miles away, was returning to his new home from a brief visit

to his former town and met Mr. Wells, an old neighbor, in the highway. Being congenial acquaintances, there naturally followed a general conversation in which Mr. Peck inquired as to the well-being of various mutual friends. There was much for Mr. Wells to tell, and Mr. Peck enjoyed getting all the news from his old neighborhood. It required several minutes for Mr. Wells to lay before Mr. Peck these numerous details. Just about this time a heavy team approached nearer and nearer and it was necessary, in view of the narrowness of the road, for these old friends to separate. As Mr. Wells started up his horse to move along, he remarked:

“There are some mighty fine people in our old town.”

“Yes,” replied Mr. Peck, “and the farther you go the better they are.”

The personal application of Mr. Peck’s remark will be appreciated when it is explained that Mr. Wells lived on the very first farm across the boundary line in the town under discussion.

In these degenerate gasoline days, there is less opportunity for such friendly exchanges of left-handed compliments. When the horse was the chief mode of conveyance, the frequent watering trough afforded occasional chances for the circulation of the perennial Yankee jokes.

“Say, Put the Doctor Ahead”

A man returning to his farm from a visit to the grocery store, in waiting to give his horse a drink, fell in behind an unusual collection of vehicles. At the head of the line with his horse's nose in the trough, was a well-known undertaker. Directly behind, waiting for his turn was a veteran dealer in tomb-stones. And next in line was the village doctor. The man in the rear, who knew all the parties concerned, could not resist the opportunity to make a suggestion.

““Say,” he called in loud tones to those in front. “You’ve got this procession dead wrong; you ought to put the doctor ahead!”

All this is but a part of the record of the past. The actors have all passed on, but there are many more recent echoes of amusing happenings along the country roads.

The Scrambled Eggs in the Highway

At the foot of a long hill, near the outskirts of a certain busy town, the middle of the snowy road for a protracted period of winter cold, presented the appearance of well scrambled eggs.. In reality it was not exactly an optical delusion either. A well-known farmer, who lived considerably back in the hill country, started out one day in his old-fashioned "pung" sleigh to deliver to a local grocery store two or three weeks' accumulation of fresh laid eggs. These were carefully packed in a receptacle with a loose cover. Just as he was reaching the foot of the hill near the railroad, a train suddenly darted into view and while his horse was old enough to have become steady, he had never become reconciled to the arrogant actions of a locomotive. He gave a quick leap and in spite of the best efforts of his driver, succeeded in

dumping the contents of the sleigh into the middle of the road. The slaughter of eggs was practically complete.

The conventional thing to say would be that the driver, who soon controlled his horse, returned to his home a sadly disappointed man. But this would in reality be a mis-statement. The spectacle of thirteen dozen eggs totally wrecked in the middle of the highway and the prospective wonderment of passersby so stimulated the farmer's Irish sense of humor, that he told the story with great delight to everyone whom he could induce to listen to him. Naturally his attitude regarding this untoward event might have been somewhat different had he been in circumstances which made the loss of the eggs a matter of any real importance.

The occasional wrecked vehicle which may be seen by the roadside in country districts is more likely in these days to be a gasoline buggy than one drawn by horses. But one midsummer day not long ago, travelers along a back country road observed with much

curiosity what remained of an old time buggy which indicated a bad case of misunderstanding between some horse and its driver. Those who found out the facts were considerably amused.

The Story of the Rebellious Horse

A prominent farmer in the neighborhood had somewhere acquired a horse whose disposition had become permanently sour. This horse was not satisfied to work eight hours a day, or six hours, or in fact to do any work at all. She was on a permanent strike and inclined to sabotage. Her owner therefore decided that there was no use in bothering any longer and announced his intention of having the horse killed.

About a half mile away there was a young man who believed that he possessed certain hypnotic powers, at least in the matter of horses. He told the owner of the striker aforesaid that it was a shame to close out as good a horse as that, whereupon the owner promptly made him a present of the animal. The young man led the horse home and made

elaborate plans for a process of education and benevolent philanthropy which would cause the rebellious equine to see things in an entirely different light.

As the eccentric horse had a record of becoming too handy with her heels, it was desirable to proceed with caution.

The early results of the ensuing course of treatment were encouraging. The horse seemed to respond to the humane methods of the experimenter. Every evening the horse received a lesson and finally was harnessed and driven short distances on the highway. His new owner, however, seemed to prefer seclusion for his experiments. At last he began to be convinced that the horse's nature was entirely changed. He was elated with the success of his efforts.

Finally he decided that the time was near when he could exhibit his new possession by daylight. He looked forward with much anticipation to the admiration with which his efforts would be regarded by all the young men of his acquaintance.

Before making this public show of his horse, he concluded to give it one more try-out. He had always driven with a stiff check rein which held the horse's head very high. When a horse's heels go up, its head goes down. After making a little detour on a comparatively level road, he turned on to a stretch of road which led up a hill. When he had nearly reached the top it occurred to him that it was a little hard on the now re-formed horse to make her climb where it was so steep with the head held up so high. He stopped the animal, got out of the buggy and unhooked the check rein. He resumed his seat in the buggy, gathered up the reins and started the horse again. Holding the reins very firmly he was, for a minute or two, able to keep the animal's head in nearly the desired position. Then followed a struggle between the horse and the driver which resulted finally in the horse depressing its head to the right angle, after which there was a most remarkable bombardment of rapidly moving heels which, according to the driver's subsequent report, established a new record over anything he

had ever yet heard of. The horse trainer fortunately succeeded in escaping uninjured from the vehicle, got the horse by the head, unfastened the straps, and ran what was left of the wagon up on to the bank at the roadside, from which point he led his horse home, thankful that the shades of evening were such as to make his movements obscure. The horse regeneration experiment was a failure.

While the more remote highways of New England are anything but a joy during certain months, they become more attractive as the fields and woodlands assume their summer hues.

What Happened to the Junk Man

One of the first signs of well developed spring in the farming sections is the appearance of the traveling junk man.

The conventional outfit required for this branch of commerce is a substantial wagon of medium size and a horse of sufficient age and discretion to stand patiently by the roadside while the driver dickers for old metals, worn-

out rubber footgear and the surplus burlap grain bags which are apt to accumulate on the average dairy farm. It is probable that the real, conscientious traveling tourist of this variety does not allow himself to profiteer to a greater extent than say 4000 per cent. As might be expected, these travelers are not regarded with much enthusiasm, although they are allowed to carry away that which otherwise would be a total waste.

One of these aggressively industrious people was making his rounds one day and left his team in front of a farmhouse while he interviewed the proprietor. Just at this point some men were repairing the road. Although his negotiations occupied several minutes, he returned empty handed, climbed into his wagon and moved along. Shortly afterward he turned off the main thoroughfare on to a side road which soon became quite steep. His faithful horse had never failed him so he was surprised to have him falter. Finally, in spite of the driver's agitated words of encouragement, the wagon began to back down hill, landing in a ditch.

No damage was done, but it was all very mysterious to the junk man. He could not understand what had happened to the horse. The animal did not seem to be sick and had never been inclined to be balky. At last he concluded to take an inventory of the load. Lifting a pile of ancient burlap bags in the rear of the wagon, he discovered eight or ten large boulders, each being about as large as two men could lift. It seemed very amusing to the men working on the highway a short distance away when the junk man by herculean efforts succeeded in dumping the rocks out of the end of the wagon.

What Happened to Another Junk Dealer

On another occasion a young scion of a prosperous junk dealer started out with a high powered automobile to make a quick collection of burlap grain sacks which at that time were in demand at very high prices. Naturally he did not care to pay much for these bags and he was not taken very seriously by the up-to-date farmers whom he visited. Passing into an unfamiliar section he

asked the manager of a large farm whom he had been annoying by his persistent methods, as to how he could reach a certain neighborhood not far away where there were a group of large dairy farms. He received directions and shortly after appeared at one of these farms complaining bitterly of the state of the highway. The man who listened to his complaint could not understand why he had found such bad roads. A little questioning demonstrated the fact that in his disgust at the unwillingness of the opulent junk man to take "no" for an answer, the manager of the farm before mentioned had directed him to take a crossroad which was considered locally as practically impassable, even for a farm wagon. The commercial tourist succeeded in making his perilous way across to a place of safety but he narrowly escaped heart failure.

To those of rural districts who seldom travel far from the home fireside, there are suggestions of possible interest and entertainment in conversing with strange frequenters of the highway. This was especially true of

earlier days when, because of frugal habits and rather unsatisfactory public roads, unfamiliar faces in the highways were few indeed.

The Inquisitive Man by the Roadside

It is not surprising therefore that when a real old gentleman who had served his community and even his state acceptably in his more active days, observed an absolute stranger walking rapidly up the road, he should have meandered out to the front gate for a little closer inspection.

The traveler was evidently in haste, but was brought up to a short turn with an interrogation from the old gentleman that it would have been very impolite to have ignored. Then followed a conversation which is yet occasionally referred to after more than half a century.

“You seem to be in a hurry today.”

“Yes, I am.”

“Where did you come from?”

“I came from Monkton.”

“When did you leave there?”

“Day before yesterday.”

“Where did you stay last night?”

“I stayed in Goshen.”

“Where are you going today?”

“I am going to Jericho.”

“What are you going to Jericho for?”

“I am going to school.”

“A man as old as you going to school!

What are you going to school for?”

“I am going to school to see if I can’t learn how to mind my own business.”

The stranger passed on and left the old man thinking it over. The more he thought it over the more he was sure it was a good joke on himself, and being a genuine Yankee, he enjoyed the joke just as well as though it had been on someone else and it soon became well known to his acquaintances.

But while the interchange of civilities among near or more or less remote neighbors who chance to meet in the highway, is quite prone to touch upon the humorous episodes which are constantly happening to normal human

beings, there is occasionally a glimpse of the pathetic.

The Misfortunes of Mr. Foley

A man who had quite an extensive acquaintance in a certain section was driving to town one day and at a turn of the road met a genial old Irishman who was jogging his fat and sleepy old horse along toward home. The two had not met for quite a while and the conversation was much prolonged. After inquiring as to Uncle Jimmie's health and that of his family, and the outlook for the hay crop and various other subjects of mutual interest, inquiry was made as to some of Uncle Jimmie's Irish friends. Finally Mr. Foley's name was mentioned. A shadow came over Uncle Jimmie's face.

"Ah! it is indeed sorry I am for poor Mr. Foley. First he lost the foal of his mare; then he lost a sow and litter of pigs; and now, poor mon, he's lost his wife."

CHAPTER XIII

SAD TALES OF PRE-PROHIBITION DAYS.

IT would seem to be eminently fitting to group the events chronicled below in the Thirteenth Chapter of this History.

In the light of present day happenings and with the echoes of rage, despair and lamentation filling our ears, it would be hard to imagine the incredulity with which many worthy, and otherwise, patriots of a former generation would have regarded the possibilities of the present prohibition era. Indeed, there are many who now, looking back to earlier days, can with relief affectionately recall various old-timers who have passed on to another existence, and thus been mercifully spared the desolate days which now follow each other in hopeless succession.

However, there is such a thing as carrying pathos too far. So we will let the scenes shift to a famous day in the history of Hank Towner.

The Return of a War Hero

No one in his native town had ever suspected Hank Towner of being a hero. The ordinary pursuits of peace held little attraction for Hank, at least that portion which involved real actual labor. To be sure, there was plenty of reason why Hank should work every day, but there were other reasons why he did not work except occasionally, and the chief of these reasons was John Barleycorn.

However, this is a world of unsuspected opportunity, as Hank found out for himself. This was many, many years ago, but as Hank persisted long years after the supposed scriptural limit of seventy years, his history remains vivid.

War was declared with Mexico, and about the very first to respond to the call for volunteers was Hank. Military life appealed to him, and he became a model soldier. This fact, however, made little impression upon his fellow citizens who had known him so long under different circumstances. His company marched away and the war went on

NEW ENGLAND JOKE LORE

and although Hank was reported to be a good soldier, it seemed to his former associates that there must be some exaggeration about it.

One day the town woke up. There had been a great battle, at least great for those times, and wonder of wonders, one of their own boys had distinguished himself and become a national hero. The newspaper reports were read eagerly and in all details. Hank who was assigned to a battery company, had remained at his post when his comrades had fled and had single-handed held the enemy back with volleys of grape-shot.

The town was even more impressed when it was learned that Congress had passed a vote of thanks to the distinguished soldier whose heroism and unfailing nerve had saved the day.

Every citizen of this patriotic little town thrilled at this report. To think that they had had a national hero grow up in their midst and had never recognized the fact! They really felt ashamed to look each other in the face. But they resolved if Hank ever

THE TONIC OF YANKEE HUMOR

got back to his home town he would get an ovation such as had never been known in that valley before.

The war came to an end. The troops were ordered home. It was time to show their appreciation.

A meeting was therefore held and the leading citizens constituting the Reception Committee were authorized to equip themselves with badges, engage a band and declare a public holiday for the town, in order that the distinguished son who had cast such glory upon even the most conspicuous of the town's people should receive suitable testimonial of the esteem in which he was held. This of course is but a meager abstract of the gracious phrases of those who elaborated the reception plan.

No railroad reached the town at that time and Boston passengers came by stagecoach. Definite arrangements were however made by which it could be known just what day Hank would arrive.

The auspicious day dawned bright and fair and business was practically suspended. Long

before the stage was due to arrive early in the afternoon, the streets were thronged. The Reception Committee had repaired to the principal hotel, at which point the stage was to deliver the distinguished passenger.

Stagecoaches were run on an excellent schedule in those days. And at about the time prepared for in the program, small boys who had climbed the tall trees on the hotel lawn, announced in shrill tones that the stage was coming. A thrill passed through the crowd. This was a day to remember. And indeed it was. The driver of the six Morgan horses attached to the stage with the long reins wound around his hands, brought his equipage skillfully down the long hill and through the covered bridge, from which point he passed down the street and around the corner. The road was now straight to the hotel and the spirited horses came down the street with a rush, drawing up before the hotel portico with a grace which none but Morgan horses could ever equal.

The Reception Committee of distinguished citizens, wearing their high hats and badges,

now came impressively down the steps of the hotel and formed in a semi-circle at the side of the coach. Some unfamiliar passengers climbed down from the top and two or three women looking exceedingly disgusted, got out of the interior of the coach. There was an awkward pause. Then someone asked the driver,

“Where’s Hank?”

The driver pointed significantly toward the interior of the coach. The spokesman of the Reception Committee stepped forward and looked.

Hank had arrived! He was lying in a stupor on the floor of the coach, while the strong alcoholic odor which floated out upon the atmosphere made all further questions unnecessary.

It is often hard to decide whether the man who performs a kind deed for his neighbor or the neighbor himself is the most benefited by the friendly act. In the following instance it is evident that the chief benefit derived was to the party of the first part.

The Motorist Who Was Good to Antoine

Antoine was a natural born hustler. No one knew better how to get a bumper crop from his farm or how to drive a harder bargain in a livestock transaction. His naturally rapid accumulation of assets, however, was being constantly depleted by the apparent necessity on his part of taking a few days off every now and then, in order that he might sample various brands of wet goods. As there was not only a considerable expenditure of cash, but a loss of time involved in these holidays, they were expensive, even if we leave out the consideration of fines imposed when Antoine's powers of locomotion had become totally suspended.

It was therefore an unpleasant sight to a certain prosperous young business man of the vicinity, when one afternoon, at the intersection of two busy streets he beheld Antoine whom he had known a long time, ambling along very plainly under the "influence." To the young business man it seemed a shame

that so naturally industrious and worthy a citizen should be allowed to perambulate directly into the arms of a cop, which seemed likely to happen in the very near future, and thus very likely find it necessary to pay a fine before he could get back to his farm.

These reflections were followed by a noble and generous impulse. Calling to Antoine, he told him he was going in the direction of the latter's farm and would be glad to take him home in his car.

Antoine promptly accepted the invitation, climbed into the car and in a short time was unloaded, safe and sound, in his own door yard. He expressed loquacious thanks for the favor which had been done and the young business man went on to look after some incidental matters in the vicinity, feeling greatly pleased with himself.

Antoine's farm was not far distant from the trolley system which took him into the town from which he had just recently been delivered. When the motorist had made his rounds and returned to the starting point, and had run his car up to the curb, he looked up

the street and rubbed his eyes. Had the last two hours been a dream, or had he actually performed a noble act? A look at his speedometer convinced him that he had actually made the trip, however.

What he saw that was so confusing was Antoine just getting off the trolley car. There had been just about time enough since he had been taken home for him to meander down the road and catch the car for the original starting point.

Antoine had come back to town to finish the job.

To certain citizens there would seem to be something radically wrong with society when prohibition officers will deliberately receive and sometimes actually destroy "good liquor."

The Tale of a Rescued Keg of Whiskey

It was a shock to Harry W—years ago when he heard that there had been a prohibition raid on a certain bottler of soda water and various other colored fluids, during which several five-gallon "kags" of whiskey,

gin and brandy had been dumped unceremoniously into the river.

It seemed as though something ought to be done about such a reckless act and after some reflection Harry decided there could be. Hastening down the street to the outskirts of the town, he entered a fringe of bushes by the river bank and waited. Sure enough, shortly afterwards down came two kegs, the bungs of which had been knocked out before their emersion and which were wabbling along in the current.

Wading out into the stream, Harry succeeded in towing these two kegs to the shore, and pulling them into the bushes he anxiously sampled the contents. In one of the receptacles, river water had very sadly marred the flavor of the original contents, but in the other, by great good luck, there was very little adulteration. Harry smacked his lips and, carefully hiding the keg in the brush, hastily withdrew. Late in the evening he secured his prize and succeeded in taking it unobserved to the home of his father, with whom he lived, hiding it in the cellar.

When Harry told his father what he had done, the latter was greatly pleased, but cautioned him that he must not let a certain younger brother know anything about it, as he might indulge too freely.

From that time on, day after day, the father and son, coming in from their tasks, would adroitly make their way to the carefully concealed prize in the cellar, from which they would emerge with that deep satisfaction associated with luxuries which can be enjoyed at someone's else expense.

However, the younger brother became interested. It seemed to him that there was "something doing" in the house. So, one morning he decided that he was not able to work and left to himself he made a careful search of the cellar. Just what he did afterwards may be inferred from the sequel.

When the father and son sat down to supper, there was a vacant place. Hugh was absent. Just what he was doing was uncertain, but the mystery was soon solved. A kindly neighbor came in to say that a cop had found Hugh parading the streets in such

an extremely hilarious condition that he had found it necessary to place him in seclusion to sober up.

The next morning Harry and his father went to court, paid the fine and Hugh was allowed to go home. Just what became of the keg and its contents does not appear in the history, but it is not likely that it was taken back to the river.

While the anguish produced by prohibition is of recent date in most states, in one or two New England states it befell to an earlier generation to endure this form of privation a good many years ago.

The Prohibition Whale Oil

In this region prohibition made its entrance about the time that whale oil was in its last stages of usefulness for illuminating purposes.

It had been a long established custom to include among other necessities at the grocery store, the refilling of the family jug with Medford rum. And when, owing to meddlesome tactics of certain teetotalers, storekeepers

became somewhat shy about replenishing these jugs, there was much dismay.

However, there were exceptional dealers who not only had a stock of old Medford on hand, but felt a deep sympathy for old reliable customers who were thus subjected to such inconvenience, and who would "find a way." One of these ways was to have the customer call for oil and at the same time give a certain signal. When this plan was working well, the customer would find the contents of the jug to be entirely satisfactory.

One Saturday afternoon, two worthy citizens who lived on adjacent farms back on the hills, started to go to the country store to do a little "trading" for their wives. Incidentally one of them took along the faithful old jug which had been refilled several times in a very satisfactory way since the prohibition edict was supposed to be in full working order.

Entering the store, the man with the jug approached the counter and gave his order for a few small articles needed by the house-keeper at home. As there were people stand-

ing about and the clerk was a new recruit, the customer asked that the clerk fill the jug with "oil," at the same time giving him the usual signal, a broad wink. After a brief chat with acquaintances regarding crops, the weather, etc., the customer gathered up his parcels and his jug and accompanied by his neighbor, who had also made some moderate purchases, went outside, placed the parcels in the buggy and started for home.

It is quite likely that they would not have started for home nearly so soon but for anticipations associated with the jug. A half mile or so out of the village there was a bend in the road, an old-time covered bridge being the only building in sight. The team was brought to a halt and while the horse started to browse by the roadside, the jug was brought out by the owner, uncorked and passed over to his friend, who, relieving himself of a "chew," lifted the jug to his lips and took a large mouthful of the contents. Controlling himself by violent effort, he passed the jug back to the owner who was waiting with as much patience as he could muster,

leaned over the side of the buggy and succeeded in relieving his mouth of its unwelcome contents. The owner of the jug, however, was not so fortunate, as in his eagerness he swallowed a good-sized mouthful of the whale oil before he discovered his horrible mistake.

Tradition has it that these two worthies were never quite so friendly after that unfortunate incident. What happened to the store clerk is unknown.

Kerosene oil would doubtless prove to be a very enticing beverage compared with whale oil, perhaps as nauseous as any oleaginous substance yet discovered.

When in prohibition times some pleading citizen who has been the recipient of illegitimate favors becomes too much elated and "discloses" on his benefactor (?), he is regarded by the faithful as having reached the subterranean depths of infamy.

The Righteous Wrath of “Marm” Hooker

Such was the opinion at least of a certain robust woman who kept a hotel and who was widely known as Marm Hooker. Yielding to the persuasions and implorings of a certain ne'er-do-well, she supplied him with a flask of stimulant which he needed for his “run down system.” The result was that the object of her benevolence became hilarious and later on, under the severe cross-examination of the prohibition officer, “disclosed” on his benefactress. In her opinion, human depravity could reach no lower depths.

Besides providing accommodations for man and beast in the function of tavern keeper, Marm Hooker would arrange once a month or so during the winter for a public dance in the old-fashioned hall at her hotel. Patrons who attended these dances were not exclusive in their social ideas.

In a remote corner of the second floor of the tavern, there was a small room and when the dance was well under way, Marm Hooker

would withdraw to this little sanctum of hers, while those whom she regarded as trustworthy would one by one secure admission for two or three minutes.

One night who should appear at this dance, which was public, but the ignominious person who had at one time "disclosed." When Marm Hooker learned that he was present, she frowned, but when she opened the door of her sanctum, after repeated knocks and found that this same person had the unparalleled impudence to again ask for liquid refreshments, her indignation found expression, with such effect that the applicant slunk away in confusion.

An hour passed. At a certain signal the door would be opened and a customer admitted. Business had been brisk and the robust proprietress had forgotten for a moment the impudent assurance of the man whom she had chased away. There came another signal in exactly the prescribed form and this genial lady, opening the door two or three inches, had it pushed wider open and who should come inside but the obnoxious visitor afore-

said. As he came in, he slammed the door shut, locked it and put the key in his pocket. He then informed Marm Hooker that he should not leave unless she supplied him with a flask of whiskey.

It would appear that the robust lady was cornered, but subsequent events proved otherwise. Pausing for a moment in amazement at the boldness of the intruder, she rushed forward and seizing the man with an iron grip, hurled him against the door with such force that it was completely shattered, the victim falling in a heap outside.

Righteous indignation can accomplish wonders.

Those who reside in the great cities become somewhat callous to those frequent tragedies to which poor humanity is still subject. But there was considerable excitement in a little country town one morning when an elderly resident was found dead in a clump of bushes by the roadside.

"Poor Kelly Took the Rest"

The victim, named Kelly, was an amiable, harmless individual who was well along in years and led a rather inactive life. While there were no marks indicating violence, the circumstances were somewhat suspicious.

An inquest seemed in order and the proper officials gathered at a suitable location to investigate, so far as possible, the circumstances associated with the case. Inquiries, however, seemed to produce no results, until at last someone recalled seeing Mr. Kelly the day before in the company of Uncle Jimmy Daley, a kind and generally respected old man who lived on a little farm some miles away.

A sheriff's officer was therefore hurriedly dispatched with a lively horse to bring Uncle Jimmy to the inquest. In a relatively short time Uncle Jimmy appeared, apparently very much cast down at the sad news regarding Mr. Kelly.

Various other witnesses, who later recalled having seen the deceased on the previous day,

gave their testimony one after another, Uncle Jimmy sitting disconsolately in the background. Finally he was called forward and asked to tell what he knew of the departed.

There was of course an opportunity for the witness to go into considerable detail, but he did not apparently consider it necessary. And after he had made his simple statement, there seemed to be no occasion to procrastinate the proceedings any further.

“Yes,” said Uncle Jimmy, “I found Mr. Kelly yesterday here in tow-un and as he lives along the road toward my place, I invited him to ride with me. After we had gone up the road a piece, Mr. Kelly took a good sized bottle of whiskey out of his pocket and offered me a drink. Indeed he offered me several drinks on the way.”

The court thus assembled listened with breathless attention to this simple statement of the witness, but were even more impressed with his final words:

“Yes,” said Uncle Jimmy in a sad refrain, “I took what was good for me, and Kelly,

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poor mon, took the rest. And now he's no more the day."

Uncle Jimmy was excused. The court hastily agreed upon a verdict and the inquest was over.

CHAPTER XIV

TALES OF THE FARM HIRED MAN

ANY record of New England rural life would be incomplete that left out the farm hired man.

The farm employer who does not make a careful study of how to get the best service he can from his help, and at the same time retain that good will and cheerful co-operation which are so essential to pleasant personal relations, is not likely to succeed to any satisfactory degree.

The Hand Mowers at Murray's

Mr. Murray conducted a large and somewhat rocky farm in the days before farm machinery had been developed to anything like its present state of efficiency. He had a large field of grass that he was in a hurry to cut and put in the barn. The field was pretty nearly rectangular and one July day Mr. Murray devised a very ingenious plan.

There were four hired men to undertake the job of mowing the field with hand scythes. Three of these men were assigned brief tasks, the fourth taking his place to turn the grind-stone while the proprietor ground the scythe. This man was then told to mow around the field.

Another man was called up to perform the same duty at the grindstone, after which he was sent after number one. The third and fourth each took their turn and was started after the others.

It took just about the same time at the grindstone as to mow across one side of the rectangular field. Consequently number one was just starting on the last lap when number four struck in behind the others.

The owner's scheme was now plain to the four mowers. He was expecting each man would exert himself to overtake the next one. But instead of being resentful, the humor of the situation appealed to them. They entered into the spirit of the occasion with enthusiasm and before twelve noon they had completed their tasks and made a record.

Naturally the owner of the farm was much pleased with the result of his carefully laid out plan. But it is not to be supposed that other occasions did not furnish opportunity for the hired men to get even. The farm holder who tries crafty methods to secure abnormal production by his employees must expect to see the score balanced sooner or later.

That "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," is shown by endless demonstrations. A conspicuous example of that hope appeared in the unique experience of the country editor.

The Sporting Venture of the Country Editor

In a certain green valley of a New England state, there was a race course. . . . There were many gamey horses in that valley and the speeding fever ran high. Several successive trotting events associated with agricultural fairs, had drawn the attention of horse lovers to the excellent track. And so it came about that the editor of a little coun-

try weekly, who lived some distance away, conceived a brilliant plan. Tired of the meager rewards of news gathering, he decided to organize a trotting tournament on this popular track and make a grand coup.

Therefore he made his announcements of several races for which he solicited entries by well-known horsemen. The response in this respect was disappointing, but he felt sure the revenues from gate admissions would make the venture successful.

The eventful day was fair and the editor was quite elated to see a considerable crowd gathering to watch the races. This state of mind, however, received a rude shock when he sauntered out to the entrance to get an estimate on the receipts. He found to his dismay that a large proportion of the admissions had been on the strength of an annual pass.

Hastening to the secretary of the Association, he was blandly informed that the grading of the track had been done on a co-operative plan by which all the farmers of the valley who contributed a certain amount

of labor were entitled to admission at all times, except during the week when the annual fair was being held.

This was a staggering blow. He was under obligations to pay the trotting purses and the prospects were that he would be several hundred dollars out of pocket. Accordingly he hastened to the owners of the trotting horses and proposed that they accept a pro rata percentage of the premiums as substitutes for the full amounts. He was coolly informed that they didn't do business that way. Considering themselves victimized, the owners began to take their horses off the grounds.

It was about at this point that real trouble began to loom up. Of those visitors who had actually paid good money for admission, there was a large element of farm hired men. They began to clamor for action. They wanted what they had paid for. Getting no satisfaction from the race horse people, they demanded an audience with the editor. He was invisible. Finally someone reported that

he had been seen entering the woods in the rear of the grounds.

Just as the vociferous youths had about decided to organize a hunt and capture the fugitive dead or alive, a carriage came dashing through the gateway and a well-known citizen pulled up his horse before the crowd, and demanded the attention of all. He said the gentleman by his side was the man they were looking for and that, although he had been alarmed by their threatening manner and had hastened away, he had come back to face the music.

The editor now arose and announced that he had arranged for the race events to be carried out. The volatile spirits of the boys were quickly evident. The races were called. The horses performed in a satisfactory manner and harmony reigned.

But back in seclusion the poor country editor was signing time notes to make up the losses of the day.

And yet hope springs eternal!

The husky farm hand who works hard during the day might be expected to retire early. And indeed he often does; but there are occasions when he does not find it necessary.

It is really astonishing how much day and night work the healthy outdoor worker of twenty or twenty-five can endure.

“I’ve Found the Spring”

It was late summer and very busy times on the farm, but this did not stand in the way of plans for a certain evening’s festivities. These plans involved several young men, a robust but tender young rooster and a supply of fresh, green corn, also for roasting purposes.

The scenes of these activities were on the shore of a little lake. The fringe of trees stretching along the shore allowed the selection of a location which was invisible to all but the parties interested.

The banquet was a great success. The corn was delicious and the roast chicken even more so. There was an abundance of jokes and time passed rapidly.

A supply of fresh water had been brought from the lake, but it was warm and tasteless. Finally one of the boys suggested that he thought there was a cold spring near by, if they could only locate it.

Away from the cheerful blaze of the bonfire, the shores of the lake were dark as Egypt. But finally one of the boys said he believed he could find that spring. Taking a small, tin pail, which they had thoughtfully brought with them, he started out.

Nothing could be seen of the young man, but his floundering about among the dense underbrush were plainly audible. Time passed and he seemed to have had considerable difficulty in locating the spring. Conversation died away, as all were watching and listening. Suddenly there came a noise of a succession of ramblings about in the bushes, followed by a loud splash as of someone falling heavily in the lake. The young men by the bonfire leaped to their feet. They were alarmed but speedily reassured.

There was a gurgling noise for a moment, next the sound of someone swimming in the

lake and later pulling himself up by the bushes, and then the well-known voice of the missing man came back with the cheerful words:

“Boys, I have found the spring!”

As before stated, it is the tactful farm owner who secures the most satisfactory production in the way of farm labor. The professional farm hand with years of experience behind him, is quite prone to be resentful of criticism.

The Expert Who Repaired the Fences

One of these old-time laborers was employed by a man who owned several adjacent farms and there was always a superabundance of work on hand.

This farmer had a large mountain pasture for his young cattle and it was rather essential that the fences be secure, as otherwise the cattle might break through, wander away and be hopelessly astray before they were missed.

One spring an old veteran farm hand was intrusted with the task of repairing these fences. After several days, he reported that everything was all right and was assigned to other work. A day or two later, a man residing on the other side of the mountain, reported that the young cattle had broken out and were in his enclosure.

The "boys," including the veteran aforesaid, were sent after the strayers and devoted the entire afternoon in getting them back into their proper domain. The next morning the same veteran fence fixer set out again with instructions to make a thorough job of the repairs this time, so that there would be no further trouble. He spent another day on the fences and came back at night with positive assurances to the owner that the young cattle could not possibly go astray again.

Two or three days later, the same neighbor came from the same distant farm, informing them that the cattle had once more broken through the fences and again a rescue party was sent after the wanderers.

That evening at the supper table those present seemed disposed to consider the entire matter a pretty good joke on the fence builder, who expressed his unqualified amazement as to how the fence could have given away after all he had done to put it in repair.

The owner of the farm who had listened to the various jocose comments in silence, finally volunteered an explanation:

“Probably a chipmunk ran along the fence somewhere and broke it down.”

When next the fence builder reported a satisfactory job, his guarantee was found to be reliable.

Sometimes the farm hand becomes a fixture in the family and is regarded with real affection by those whom he has seen grow up from childhood.

The Man Who "Arrived In a Great Hurry"

In a certain bustling New England city, there was a young married woman who retained a very considerable regard for the "hired man" who had lived in her family from her earliest recollections, even until the present. It was her great desire to have "Uncle Harvey" come down to her city home and let her show him around. As he had scarcely ever left the town in which he was born and had passed his lifetime, this lady could see great possibilities of entertainment for herself as well as for Uncle Harvey. Making her annual summer visit at the old homestead, she repeated her invitation with such earnestness that Uncle Harvey was finally, but with evident reluctance, induced to promise to visit her without fail that fall.

Every time she wrote home she sent reminders that she had the old man's positive promise and that he must not fail her. Finally he decided he had to go.

Uncle Harvey had had very little experience in railroad travel and it was quite a good many miles from the farm to the city home where he was to be entertained. After considerable discussion as to whether he should take a very early train that stopped at all stations, or go on a later express train, he was finally induced to take his chances on the fast train, although if left to his own choice he would have preferred the slower train as probably being more safe to travel on.

With a new traveling bag, especially purchased for the occasion, carefully packed for him, Uncle Harvey, in a stunning new suit complete, was carried to the railroad station, assisted to buy his ticket and escorted onto the train. His excitement was manifest, although with pretended calmness he tried to keep it hidden. His escort shook the old man's hand warmly and reminded him that he had promised to write a postal card as soon as he reached his destination.

The train moved out of the station and Uncle Harvey was lost to sight, but true to his promise he sent the postal card which

arrived at the farm the very next day. It was as follows:

“Dear Folks:

I am here safe and sound. Ethel met me at the station. I am having a fine time.

P. S. I arrived in a great hurry about three o'clock.

Uncle Harvey.”

It is one of the delightful tributes to our present civilization that it is perfectly possible for an intelligent woman to live an entire lifetime and still be so shielded from the sordid things in life as to be hardly aware of their existence.

“Where's Hadlock?”

In the cheery kitchen of an old but beautiful New England farmhouse, an elderly woman was busily engaged in preparing the evening meal. She was a woman of education and broad sympathies, prominent in the church and in all good works. Her kindly

solicitude for the household took into account even the most transient laborer temporarily employed on the farm.

One of the hands who had lived at the farm for several years was taking a short vacation. It had vaguely come to the ears of the kind lady that this man had been known to indulge a little too freely in stimulants. It seemed to her, however, that there must be some mistake about these rumors, in view of the never-failing good behavior, respectful manner and general capability of the man in his relations with the family and the farm.

Sad to say on this occasion above mentioned, there was disillusionment in store for this friendly lady.

The kitchen door opened and the man who had been on vacation entered. The cheery welcome with which she was about to greet him was checked on her lips. Somehow he looked strange—different.

Standing in the entrance to the room and swaying slightly on his feet, the man, whose

hat was tilted a little to one side, inquired in tones of solemn gravity:

“Where’s Hadlock?”

The woman looked at him in utter bewilderment. He smiled a silly smile and again asked the question:

“Shay, where’s Hadlock?”

And now it dawned upon this estimable old lady that those stories which had come to her in the past must have had some foundation. For the man who was asking this question was Hadlock himself.

Many tales have been told of the French-Canadian “habitant” which would imply that he is a very conservative person. It would appear, however, that when he becomes transplanted on a farm in “the States,” he is quite capable of getting up to date.

A French-Canadian Version of Employers’ Liability Insurance

A wide awake “Canuck” who was branching out as a progressive farmer in a New England state, became much interested in a

proposed employers' liability bill which was up for discussion in the legislature. Some of his friends, being a little skeptical, he proceeded to make the matter clear to them——how successfully the reader may judge from the following:

“All dose farmer mans be protect so when hees ole mare kick himself up, broke it the harness, kill de wagon and de hire mans; or if the mow machine run away from de span hoss and kill the whole beesness, hire man, machine and horse,——What for that farmer mans hees be blame in 'dis bill? No, sir; I guess not!”





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